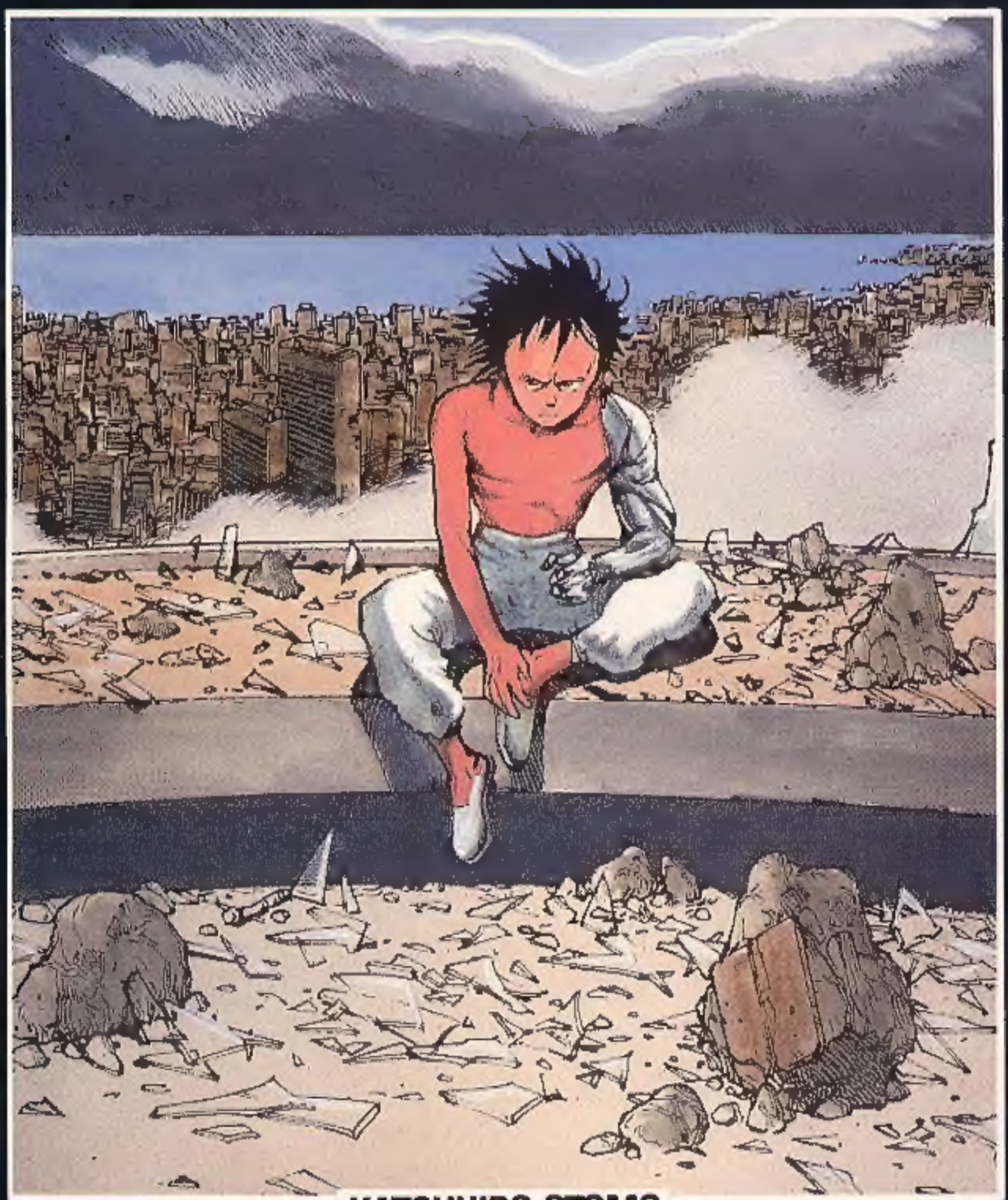
AKIRA 23™



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

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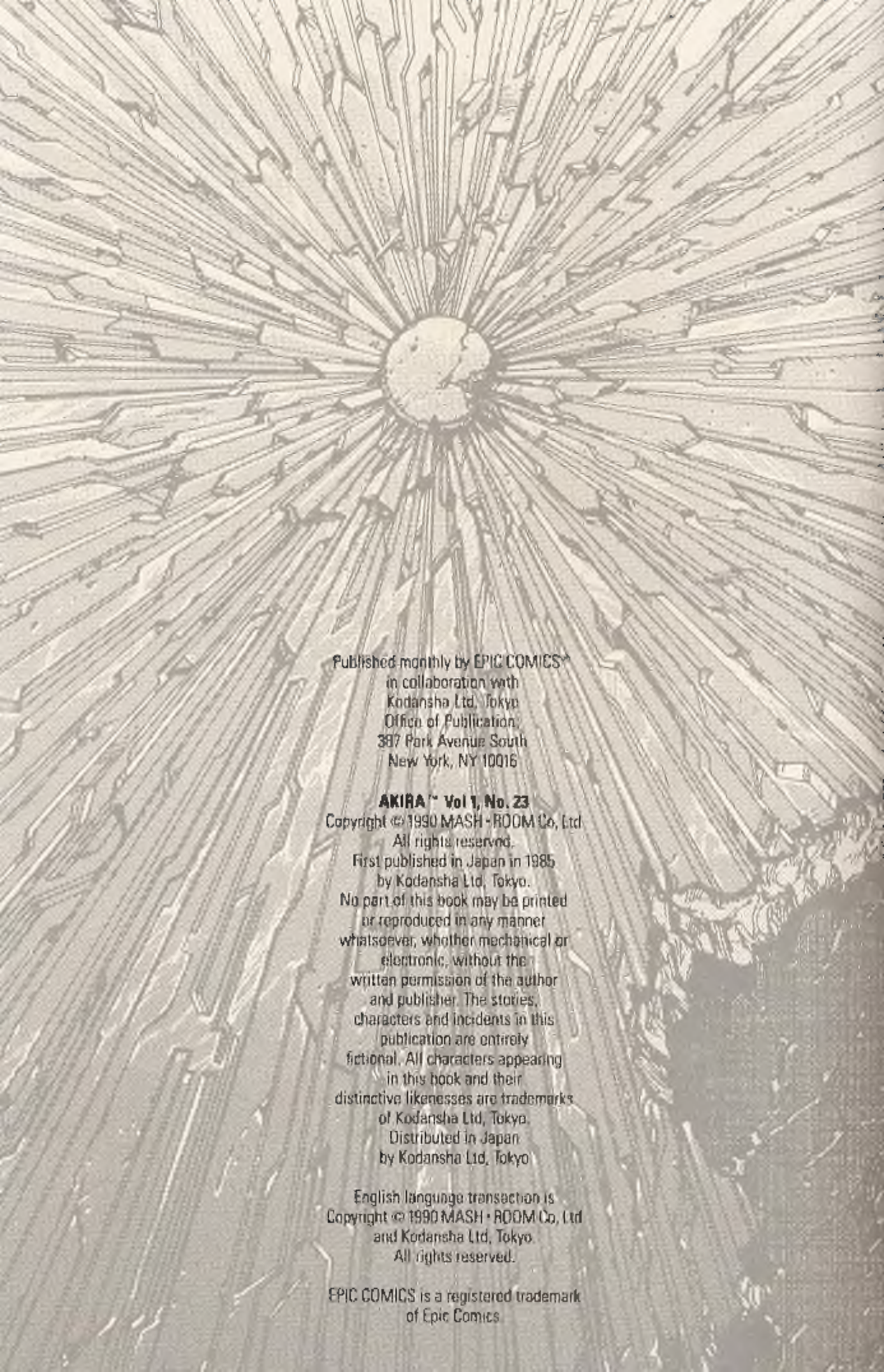

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 23

AKIRA'S RAIN

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

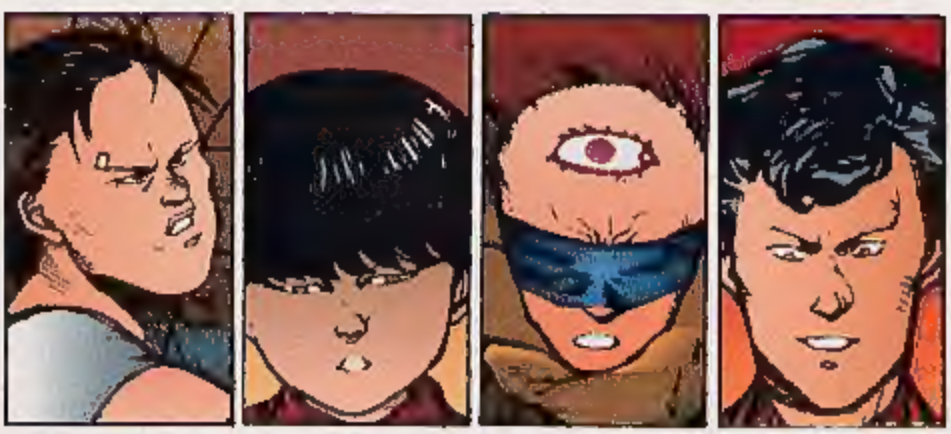
Twenty-thirty. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. In a section of **Neo-Tokyo** known as the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the destruction of World War III began—a band of teenaged delinquents led by **Kaneda** encounter **Number 26**—a child named **Takashi** who uses extraordinary telekinetic abilities to injure **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends.

As a result Kaneda and Tetsuo become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by the Colonel and an underground resistance group bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities. Members of the resistance include Kay, Ryu, and a formidable woman named Chiyoko. Among their superiors is the blind Lady Miyako—a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts.

The Colonel has a number of psychic children under his control. Each child is identified by a number marked on the hand. Lady Miyako was, at one time, Number 19. Number 28 is Akira, so powerful that since the war he has been suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's staff conducts experiments which awaken tremendous telepathic potential in Tetsuo, who is redubbed Number 41. Tetsuo is able to shrug off the most serious injuries. He goes on a killing spree, even attacking Kaneda. Followed by Kay and Kaneda, Tetsuo seeks out Akira, whose powers he fears may rival his own. In hibernation, Akira's power responds to Tetsuo's psychic energy. When Tetsuo reaches Akira's resting place, the cryogenic chamber cracks from within. **Akira** emerges, dazed and docile following his long sleep.

The **Colonel** summons the powerful SOL military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. The two are separated by the blasts. **Akira** is saved by **Kay** and **Kaneda**, but the laser strikes Tetsuo's left arm. Afterward, **Neo-Tokyo** is placed in a state of military emergency, with "caretaker robots" patrolling the street and keeping order.



Chiyoko | Akira | Seer | Tetsuo's Aide

Akira and the resistance fighters are cornered by the Colonel's troops, but all seems well when **Takashi** fondly greets **Akira**. Then **Nezu**, a former resistance leader who has betrayed his own side, arrives. He tries to kill **Akira**, but kills **Takashi** instead.

The trauma of Takashi's death galvanizes **Akira**. He fully awakens and unleashes a coherent light blast powerful enough to devastate the entire city. **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** sweep most of the people in the area upward. **Kaneda** is last seen vanishing toward the sky. Afterward, **Lady Miyako** opens her temple and offers shelter and comfort to those in need, gathering large groups of followers in the East.

Neo-Tokyo is completely cut off from the outside. In the western part of the city the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed—a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units that destroy caretaker robots and conquer military and medical relief parties sent from the outside world. In addition, **Tetsuo** conducts deadly tests on special followers, finding more psychics fit for training. The Empire is eventually infiltrated by teams of spies from the outside world.

The **Colonel** is alone, living in hiding. The remnants of his forces have joined the survivors of the resistance. **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** are sick with withdrawal from the drug which augments and channels mental powers, and when **Kiyoko**, whose powers are precognitive, tells **Kay** to find **Number 19**, **Lady Miyako** asks that **Kay** bring the

Ryu **Lady Miyako** **Tetsuo** **Kaori**

other psychics to her when they are well.

Tetsuo's new psychics kill most of the spies from the outside, but their leader, **Lt. Yamada**, escapes when **Ryu** leads him into the safety on an underground shelter. **Yamada** refuses to tell **Ryu** who has sent him or to let **Ryu** join him. He does, however, reveal that Russia has conquered part of Japan, and that the Americans' fear of **Akira** makes them reluctant to get involved.

Tetsuo forces an orgy of sex and drugs on several young girls, only one of whom—**Kaori**—survives. During it, **Tetsuo** sees visions of the past, the present and of possible futures. Afterwards, **Tetsuo** looks into Akira's mind. He emerges a terrified wreck. When he recovers, he decides that **Lady Miyako**—whose mind he also briefly touched—may be able to explain matters to him. Taking a dose of power-enhancing medication, **Tetsuo** teleports to the temple of the religious leader. **Lady Miyako** recounts to him the experiments decades earlier which created the numbered psychics and reveals that the Third World War was begun by a mental blast from **Akira**. She also warns **Tetsuo** that he alone can control Akira's near-inconceivable powers, but that he must first overcome his dependency on drugs. Disgusted and perplexed, **Tetsuo** departs. On returning to his stronghold, he neglects his duties of state, concentrating instead on trying to kick the habit.

Kay and **Chiyoko** try to move **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** to Lady Miyako's temple, but are attacked by Tetsuo's followers, who escape with **Kiyoko**. **Chiyoko** rescues the girl, but is badly wounded. The two are brought to safety by the **Colonel**, who has been living in isolation while the last of his scientists attempts to re-establish contact with SOL. **Chiyoko**, delirious, tells the **Colonel** to take **Kiyoko** to the temple, where he'll also find **Masaru**. Meanwhile, **Kay** safely conveys **Masaru** to the temple. There, **Miyako** mysteriously alludes to **Kaneda** and informs **Kay** that although **Kay** herself lacks intrinsic psychic gifts, she serves as a powerful medium for the talents of others.

Ryu and **Lt. Yamada** watch the Empire from hiding. When Tetsuo's dapper lieutenant—disgusted by Tetsuo's lack of interest in the way **Lady Miyako** has thwarted their schemes—leads most of the Empire's men out as an army,

The Colonel **Masaru** **Kay** **Lt. Yamada**

Ryu and **Yamada** move in. They are startled by an encounter with **Tetsuo**, whose withdrawal causes his power to surge erratically. **Ryu** is even more startled when **Tetsuo** blurts out what his telepathy has shown him—that the foreign spy has come to assassinate **Akira**.

Tetsuo's lieutenant leads his army to Lady Miyako's temple, and they slaughter all in their path—monks, penitants and helpless refugees alike. They are, however, thwarted by the power of Lady Miyako's psychically gifted monks and defeated when **Kay** captures their leader. **Lady Miyako** refuses to permit the execution of her enemies. Tetsuo's men depart alive, bitterly swearing revenge. They return an hour later hungry for blood and victory. **Kay**, along with **Kai**—one of the surviving members of Kaneda's old gang—urges **Lady Miyako** to flee before it's too late. When the religious leader refuses, they decide to make a last stand with **Masaru** in the temple's tower—but before they can get the boy to safety, the attack begins.

Kaneda

Kiyoko

Kai

Rhymester

FWOOM
RRRRR
THAT WAS RIGHT ON TARGET.
GO GET 'EM!
MAYBE A LITTLE TO THE LEFT...?
BOOOM
KRASH
WE'RE AFTER THAT TOWER. A COMMENDATION TO THE MAN THAT HITS IT!
BRING MORE AMMO!
LOOK!
IT'S ALL MINE!

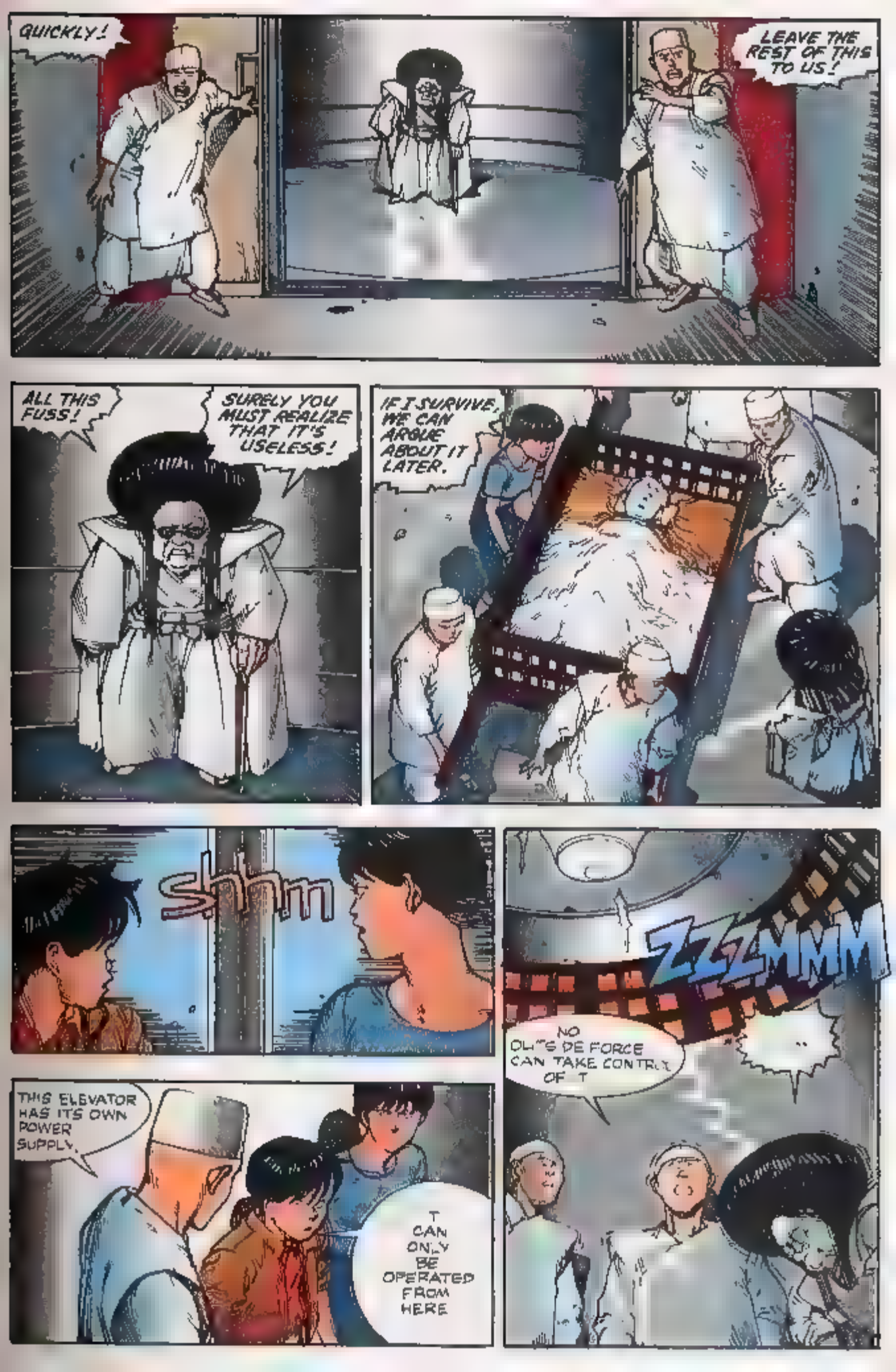
SHOOM
BWHOOM
HEY, THERE, DARLIN', DON'T YOU BE DYIN' TOO SOON.
STICK AROUND AND ENJOY THE SHOW.
MONSTER!
FLIP

skff
THERE'S NO WAY THROUGH HERE!
HEAD BACK DOWNWIND AND USE A SMOKESCREEN FOR COVER!
51
KLINK
!
FREEZE!
ONE MOVE AND WE FIRE!
P2-A5
ONCE WE SHOOT YOU, HOW YOU'LL CRY!
YOU'LL SUFFER SO!
AND THEN YOU'LL DIE!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE!
DON'T EVEN TRY!

BULLSHIT!
DON'T YOU SCOFF AT ME, OLD FART!
IT'S A SERIOUS THREAT, PHRASED AS SERIOUS ART!
HUNH?
YOU MAY FIRE AT WILL! GO ON NOW, START...
CO...
CO...
COLONEL!!

.....
WHAT IS HE TO YOU?
....
UH ..UH . UH .
YOUR OLD BOSS?
S THAT TRUE ?
YEAH BUT...
THEN KILLING HIM SHOULD BRING YOU FUN.
BUT, I...
STOP YOUR STALLING! FIRE YOUR GUN!
FIRE!

EEK!
BOOM!
THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER WITH EVERY SHOT
MAYBE THE TOWER ISN'T SUCH A GREAT IDEA WE'D BE SITTING DUCKS UP THERE
NUMBER 2?!
THIS SHRINE IS STRONGER THAN YOU THINK
WALK THIS WAY
BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO THE STARS
NO WE'RE GOING TO LADY MIYAKO'S PRIVATE ELEVATOR


QUICKLY!
LEAVE THE REST OF THIS TO US!
ALL THIS FUSS!
SURELY YOU MUST REALIZE THAT IT'S USELESS!
IF I SURVIVE, WE CAN ARGUE ABOUT IT LATER.
shhm
ZZZMMM
NO OUTSIDE FORCE CAN TAKE CONTROL OF IT
THIS ELEVATOR HAS ITS OWN POWER SUPPLY.
IT CAN ONLY BE OPERATED FROM HERE

...AH...
OH!
ARE YOU AWAKE, NUMBER 27?
WHERE IS NUMBER 25? YOU MUST FIND HER!
CAN YOU FEEL THE POWER?
HURRY! WE'VE NO TIME!
:GASP:
WHA..?
WHAT'S HAPPENING!

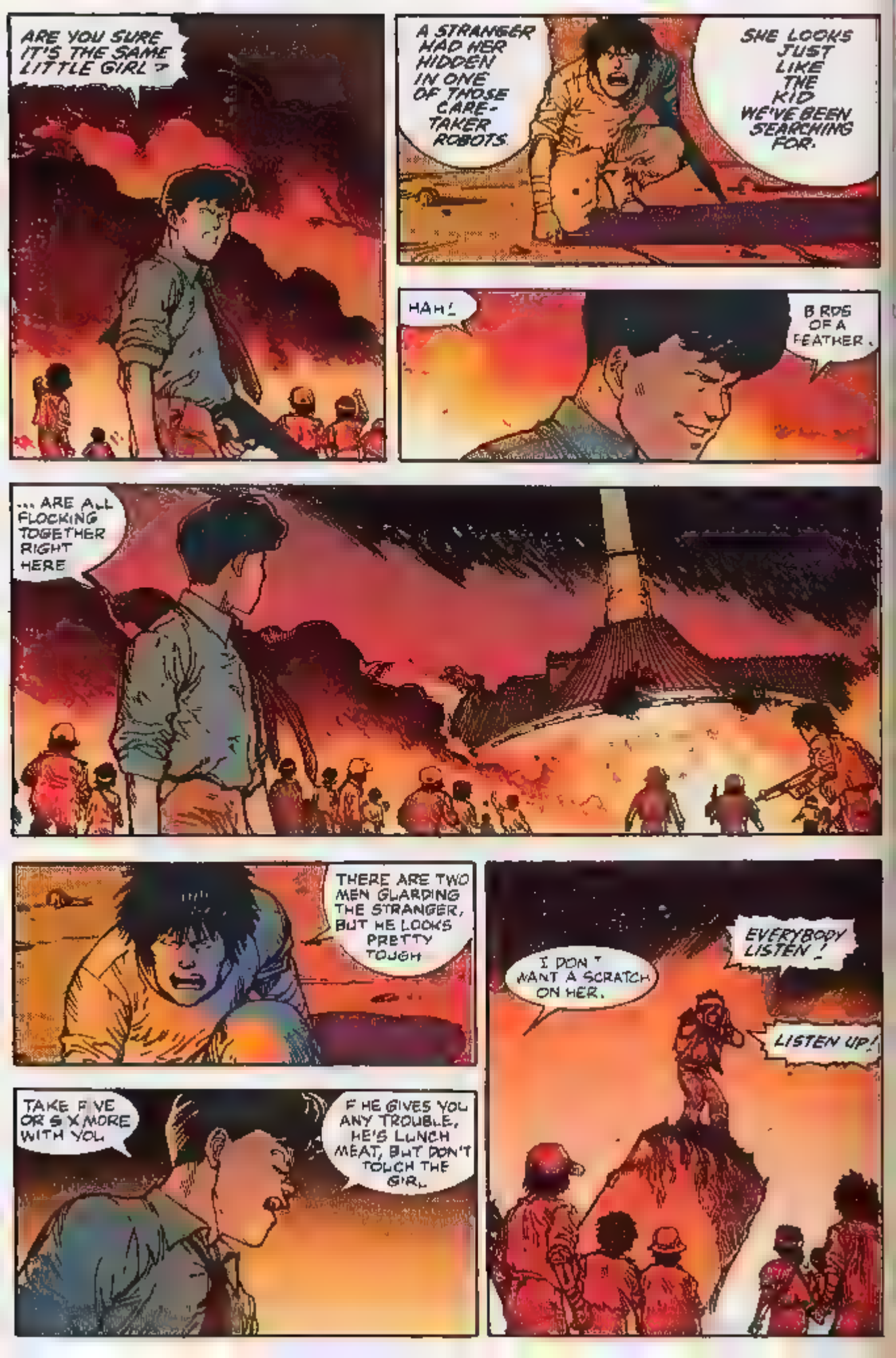
AAUGH!!!
MASARU!
WHERE'S NUMBER 25? WHERE IS KIYOKO?!
KI. YO. KO. KIYOKO IS.

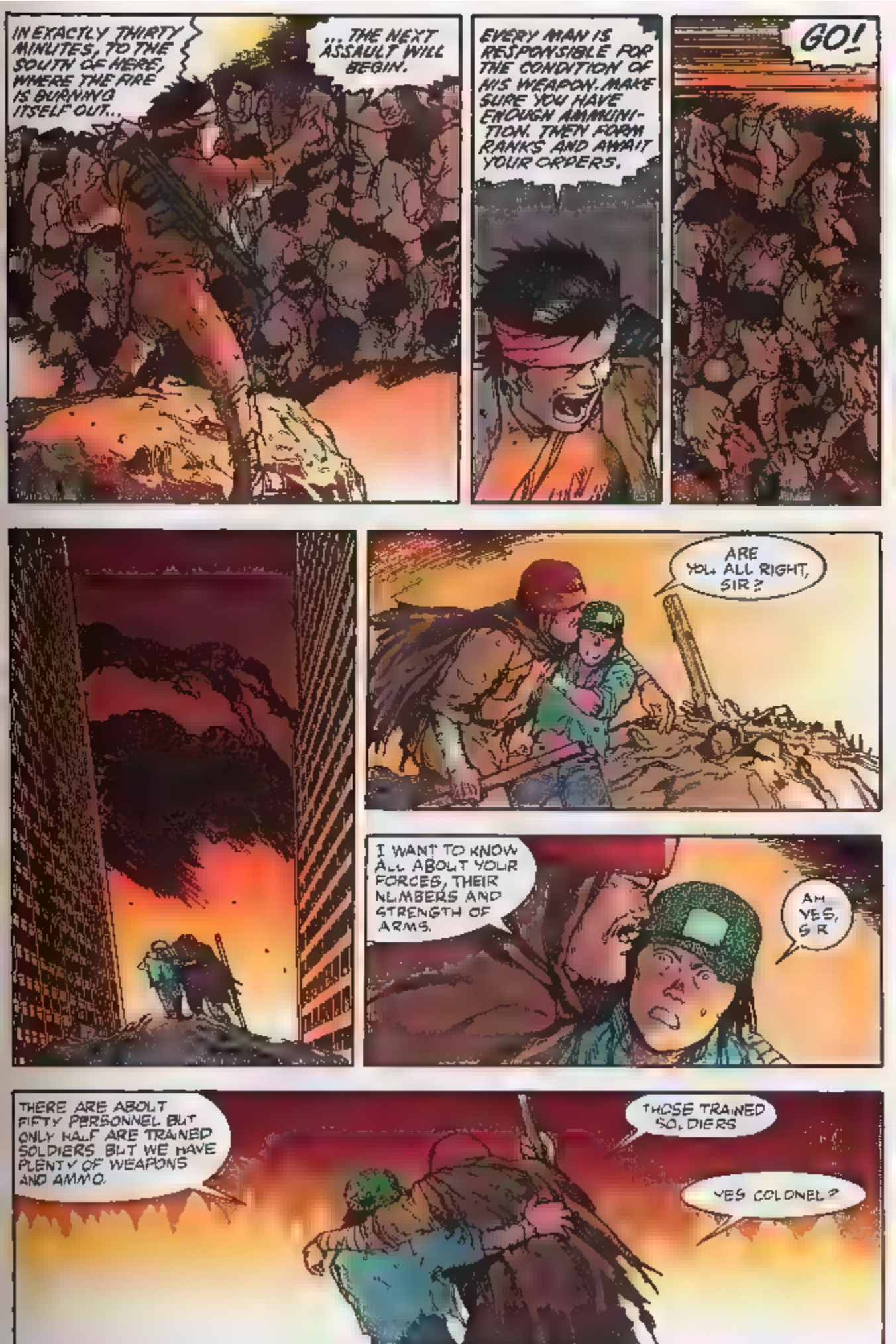
MA...
SA...
RU...
WELL? WHY DON'T YOU SHOOT?
.....
DON'T MAKE A SUPERIOR OFFICER LOSE PATIENCE WITH YOU.
KLAT
IT MOVED!
YAGH!
EH?

BHOOM
KIYOKO!
HOLD IT, YOU!
HU... HURRY.
LOOKS LIKE IT!
YOU BETTER INFORM THE COMMANDER AT ONCE.
RIGHT.
THAT'S THE KID!
THE ONE FROM BEFORE?!
DOUBLE TIME!
HURRY... TO THE TOWER.
MASARU ... S...
MASARU?!

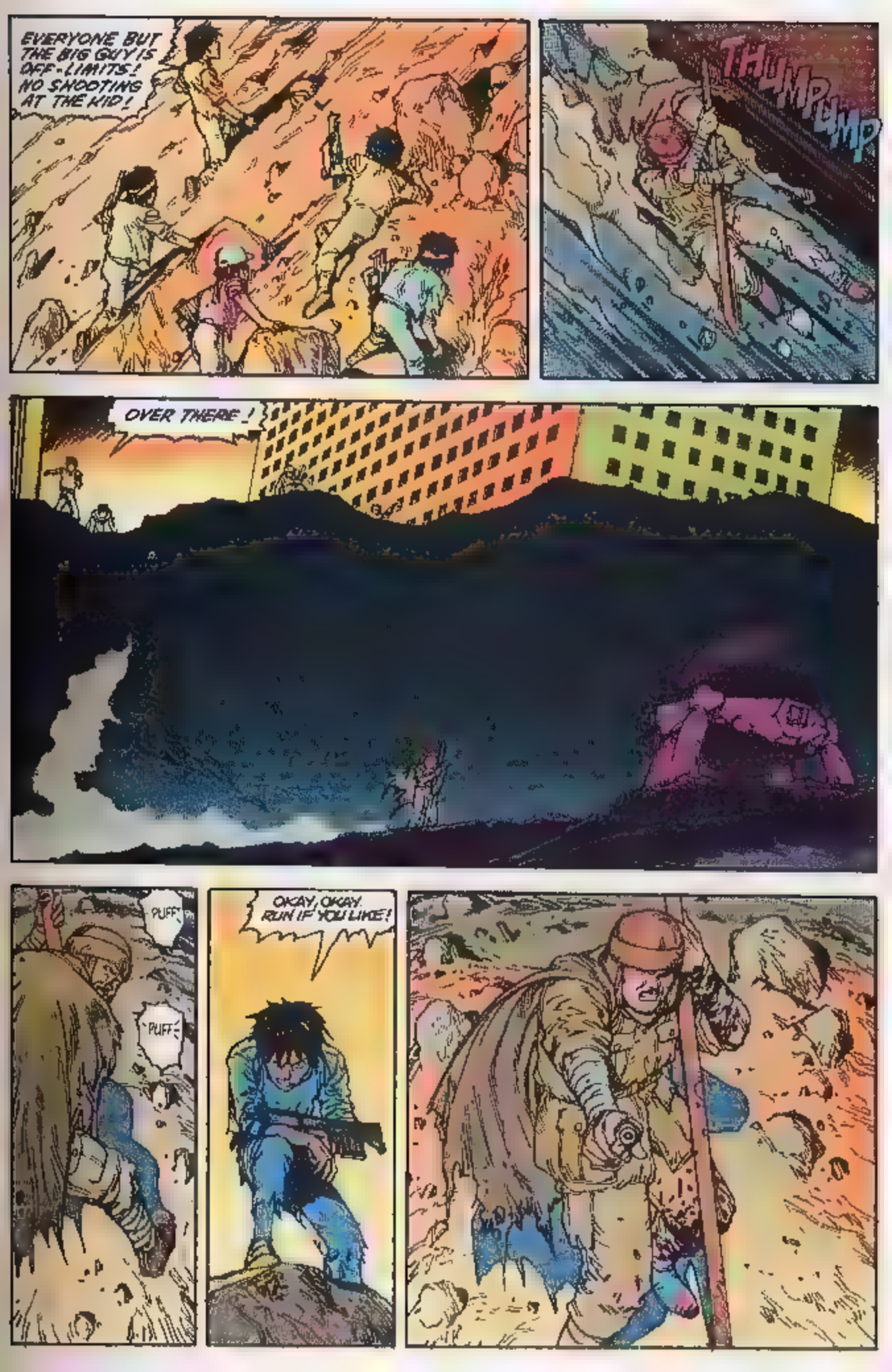
WHAT TOWER?
I WARNED YOU!
BANG BANG BANG
COLONEL!
TOLD YOU HOW YOU'D SUFFER..
FLUP
...AUGH..
...AND DIE...

BLAM
..AHEEE!
YOU... BASTARD..
THD
COLONEL!
...HURRY


ARE YOU SURE IT'S THE SAME LITTLE GIRL?
A STRANGER HAD HER HIDDEN IN ONE OF THOSE CARE-TAKER ROBOTS.
SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE THE KID WE'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR.
HAH!
BIRDS OF A FEATHER.
... ARE ALL FLOCKING TOGETHER RIGHT HERE
THERE ARE TWO MEN GUARDING THE STRANGER, BUT HE LOOKS PRETTY TOUGH
EVERYBODY LISTEN!
I DON'T WANT A SCRATCH ON HER.
LISTEN UP!
TAKE FIVE OR SIX MORE WITH YOU.
IF HE GIVES YOU ANY TROUBLE, HE'S LUNCH MEAT, BUT DON'T TOUCH THE GIRL.

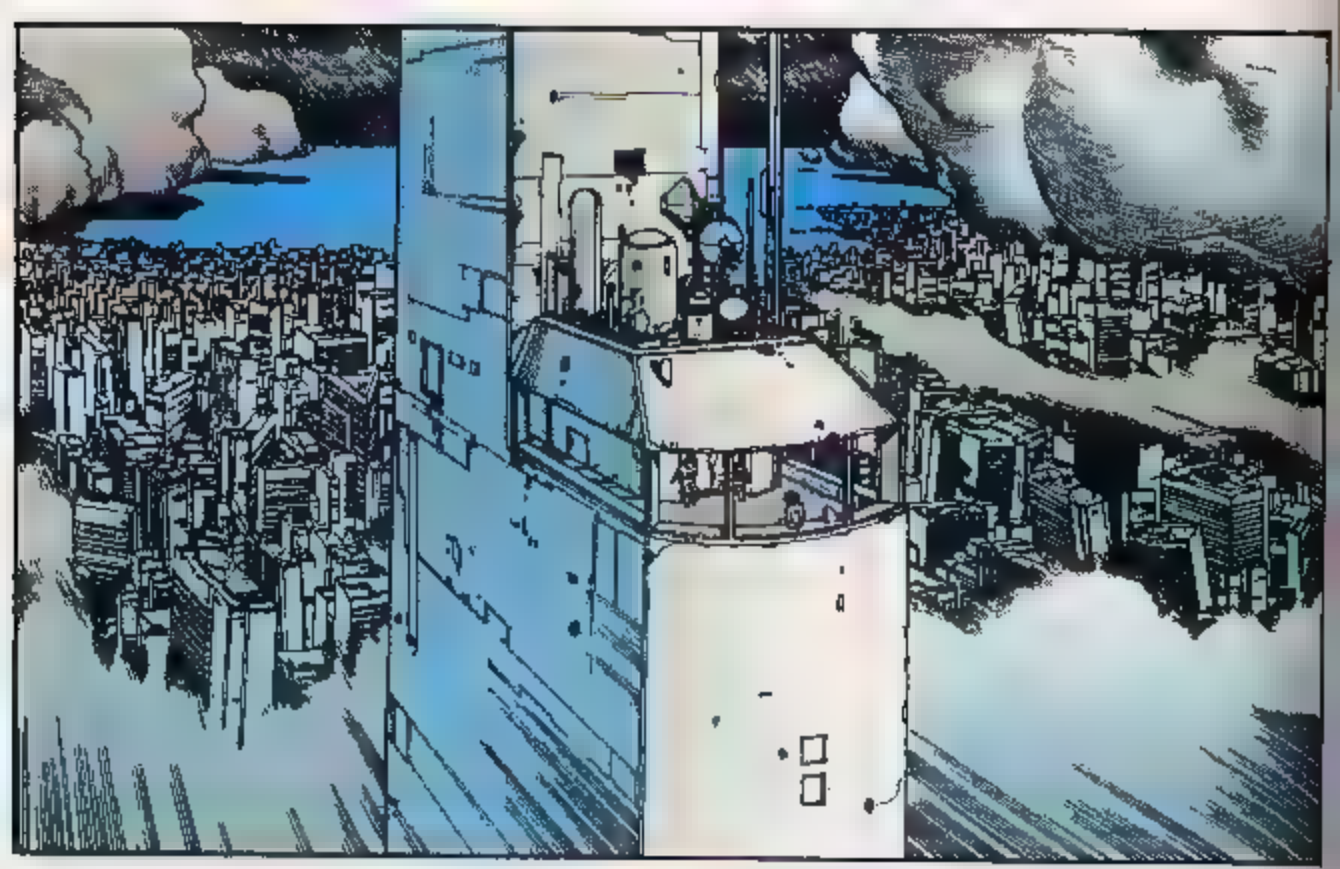

IN EXACTLY THIRTY MINUTES, TO THE SOUTH OF HERE, WHERE THE FIRE IS BURNING ITSELF OUT...
... THE NEXT ASSAULT WILL BEGIN.
EVERY MAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CONDITION OF HIS WEAPON. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH AMMUNITION. THEN FORM RANKS AND AWAIT YOUR ORDERS.
GO!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR?
I WANT TO KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR FORCES, THEIR NUMBERS AND STRENGTH OF ARMS.
AM YES, SIR
THERE ARE ABOUT FIFTY PERSONNEL BUT ONLY HALF ARE TRAINED SOLDIERS. BUT WE HAVE PLENTY OF WEAPONS AND AMMO.
THOSE TRAINED SOLDIERS
YES COLONEL?

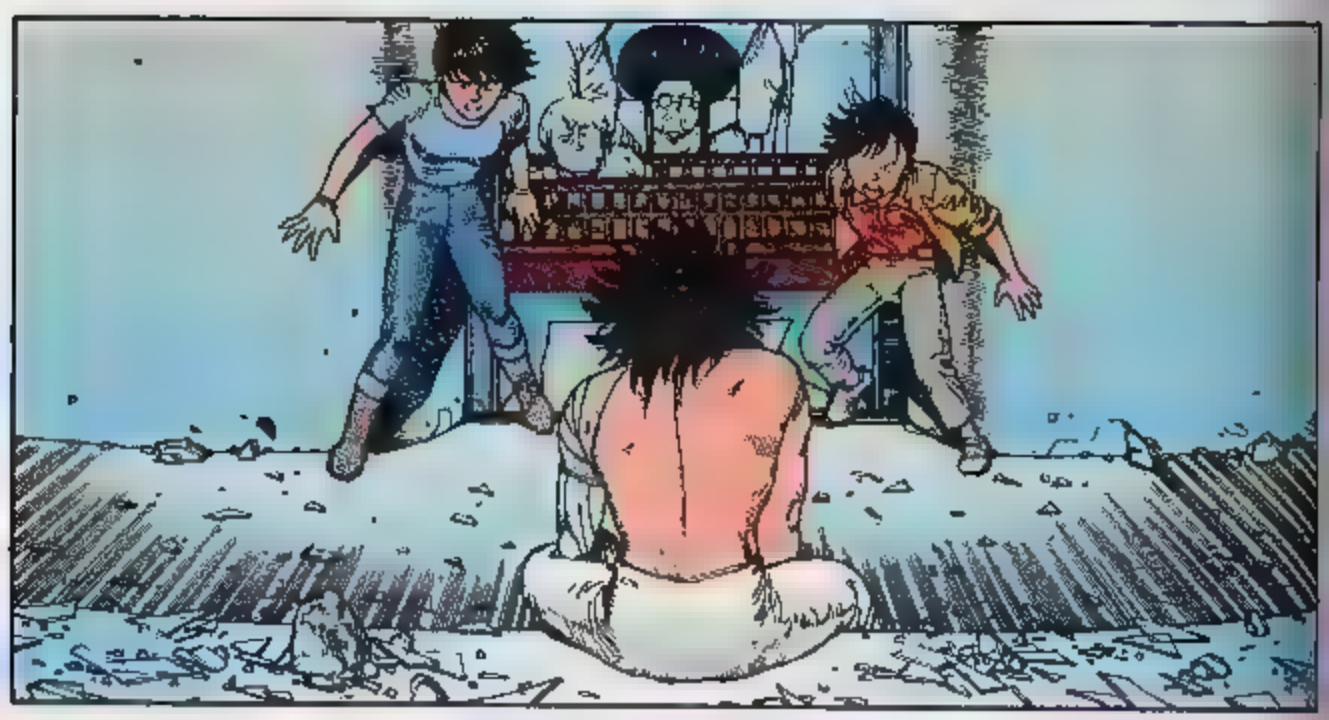
ARE THEY MY MEN?
..YES, SIR_
WHY DID YOU STAY HERE?
THIS IS WHERE MY WIFE DIED
BUDDA BUDDA
!
YOU BEANWIT! HE WAS ONE OF US!
BUDDABUDDA
DAMN!

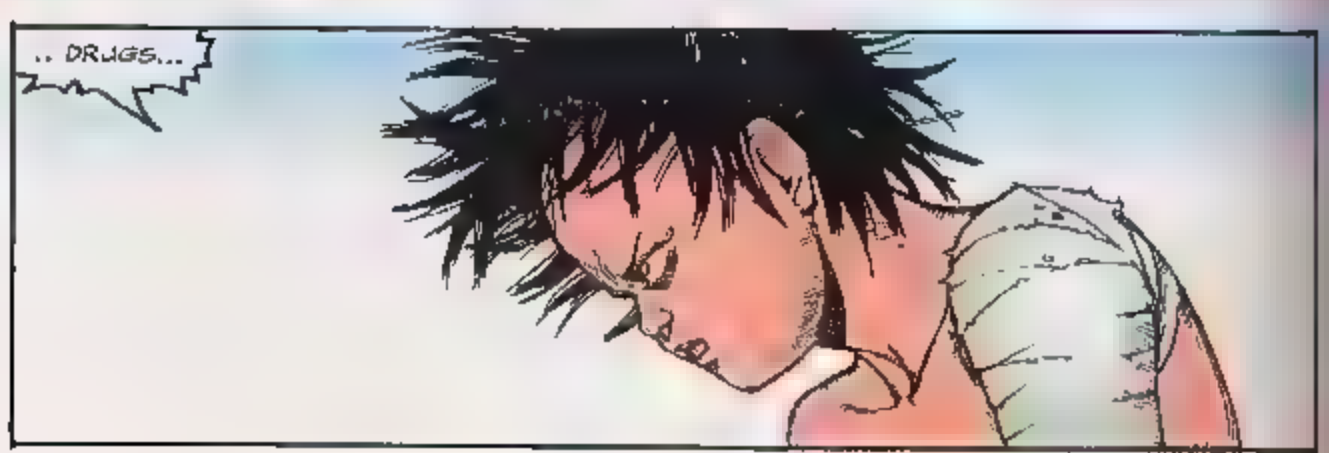

EVERYONE BUT THE BIG GUY IS OFF-LIMITS! NO SHOOTING AT THE KID!
THUMP THUMP
OVER THERE!
PUFF
PUFF
OKAY, OKAY. RUN IF YOU LIKE!

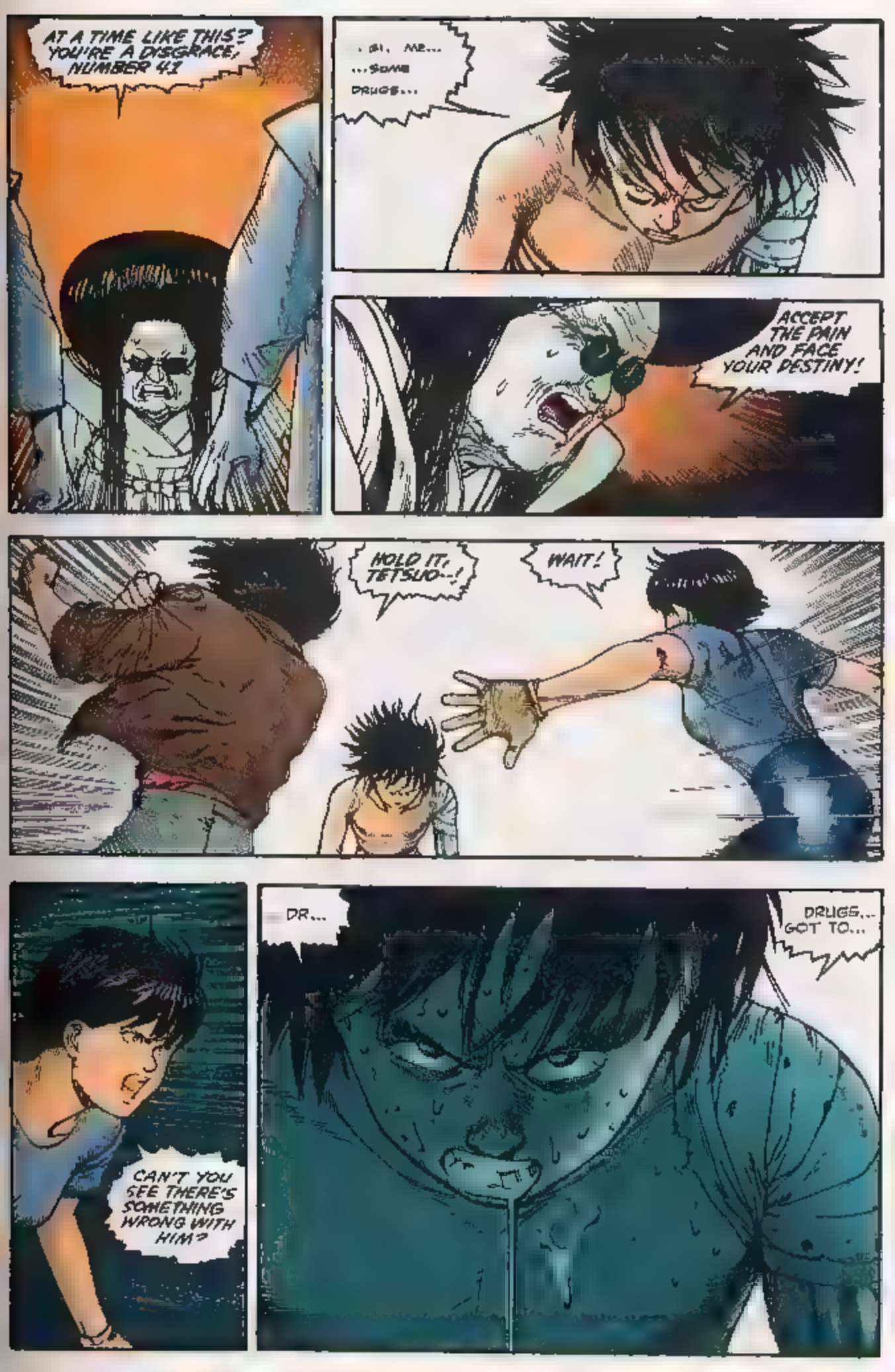
HFF
HFF
HUFF
Shmm
WE'RE THERE!
THE ROOF?!
AGHK!
VVVIII
YEEK!

!
HUMH!
OH!
TE--
TETSUO!






.. DRUGS...

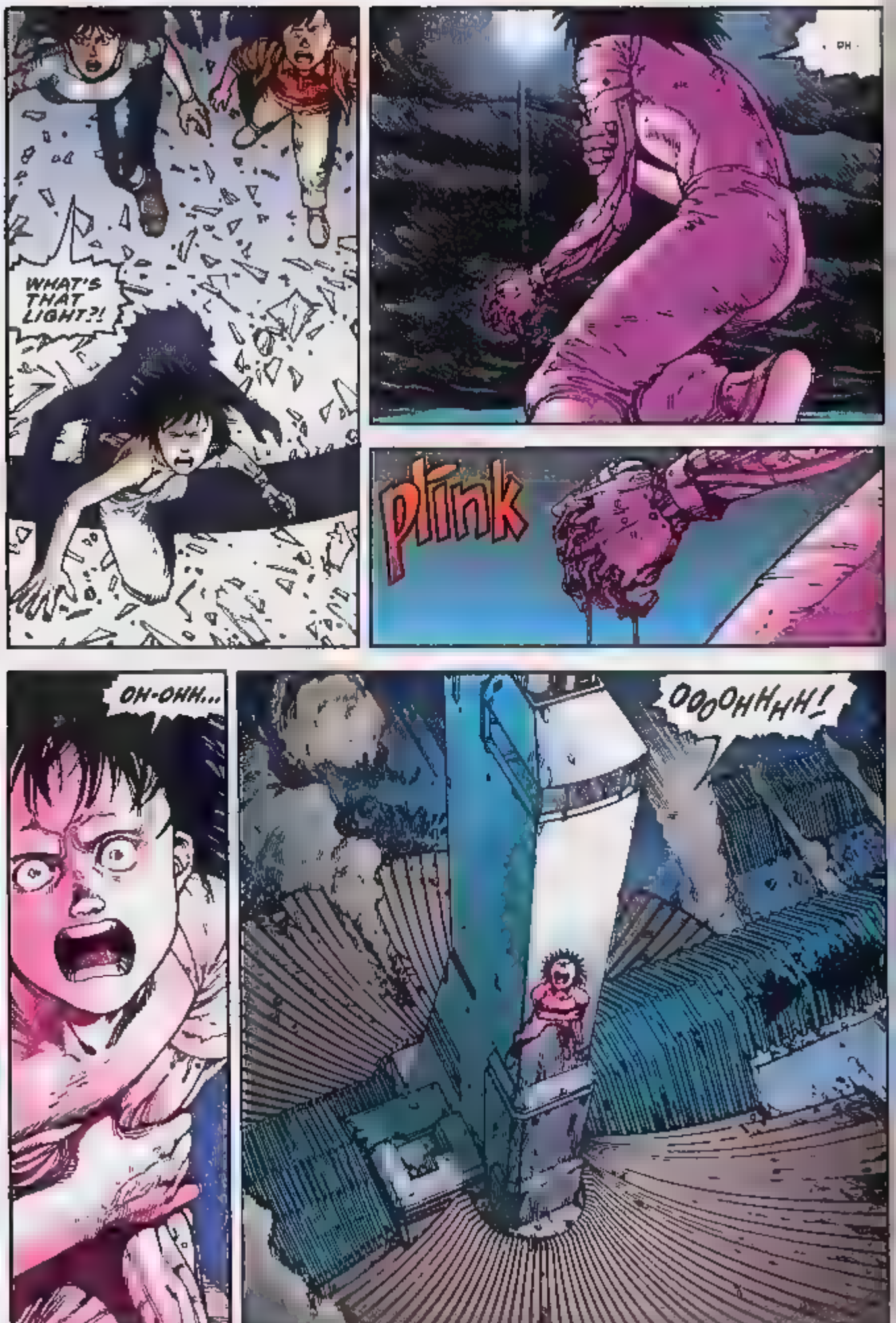

AT A TIME LIKE THIS? YOU'RE A DISGRACE, NUMBER 41
...SOME DRUGS...
ACCEPT THE PAIN AND FACE YOUR DESTINY!
HOLD IT, TETSUO--!
WAIT!
CAN'T YOU SEE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH HIM?
DR...
DRUGS... GOT TO...

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? RUN.
DID YOUR LEGS GIVE OUT ON YOU? OR DO YOU WANT TO DIE LIKE SOME HERO?
FINE! HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY!
?!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!
A LASER?

G...GRR.. RRR!
KILL HIM!
NOW!!
KIK!

SOL
740

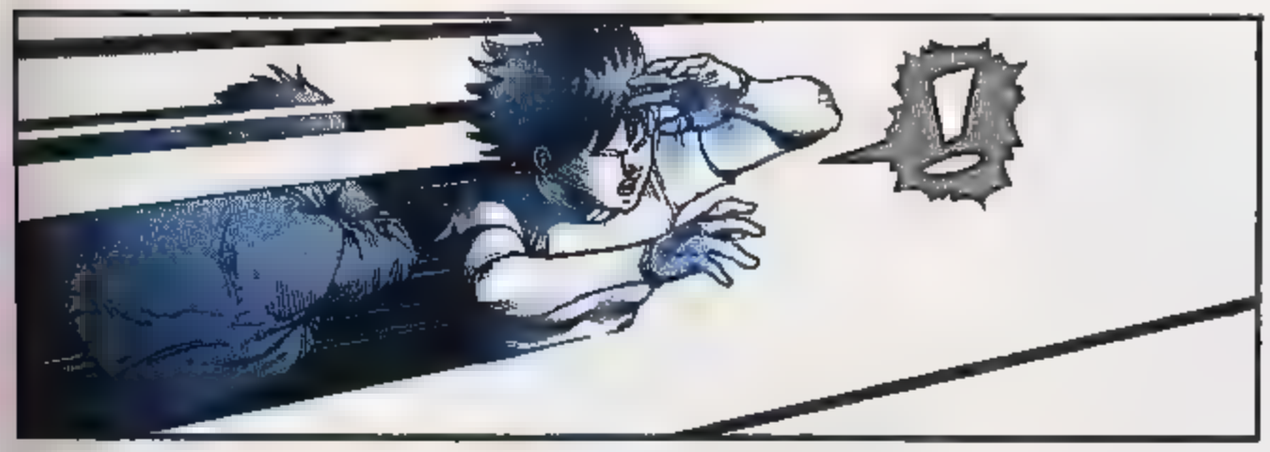
HOOM


WHAT'S THAT LIGHT?!
· PH ·
plink
OH-OHH...
OOOOHHHHH!

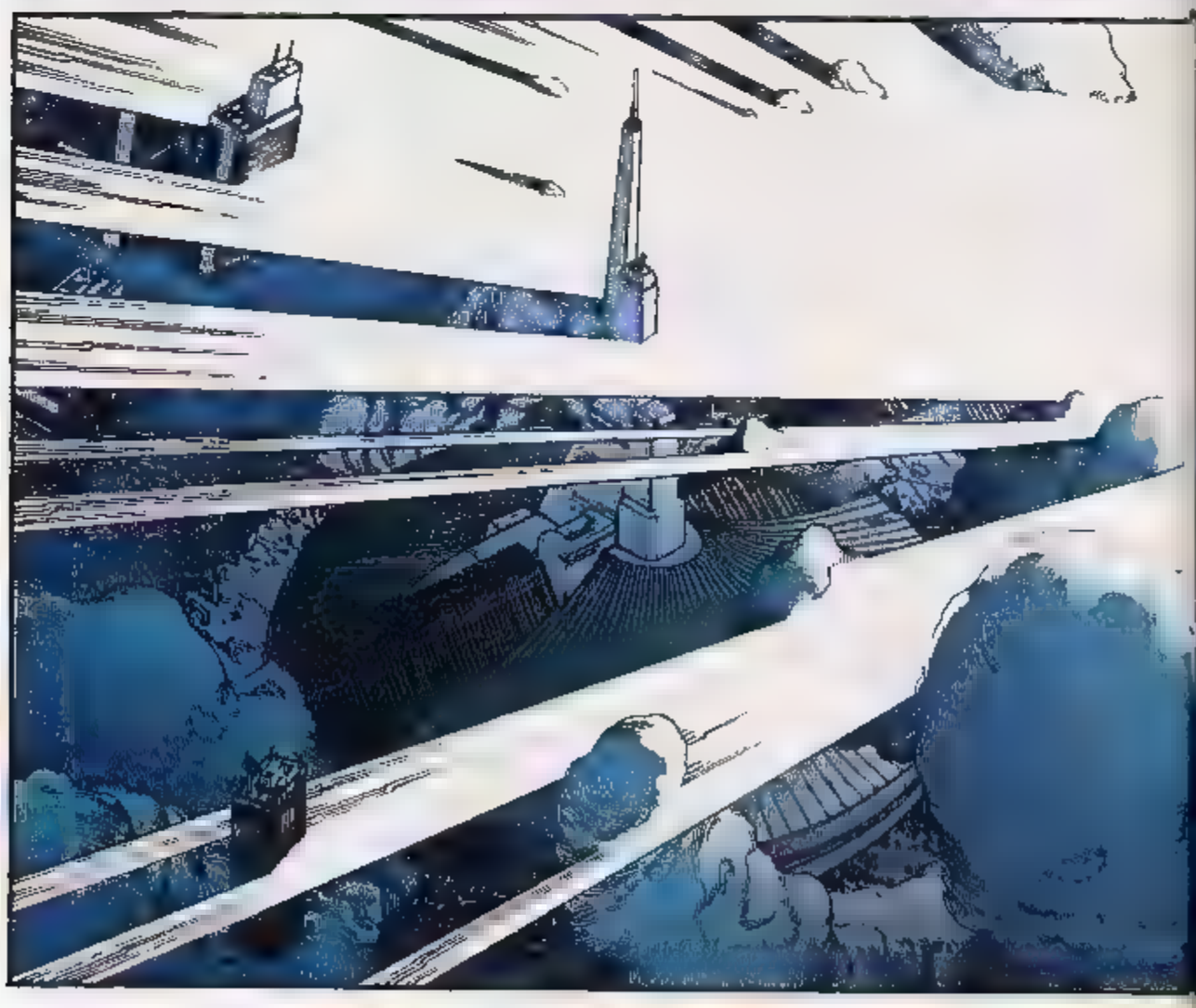
HE'S FLYING!

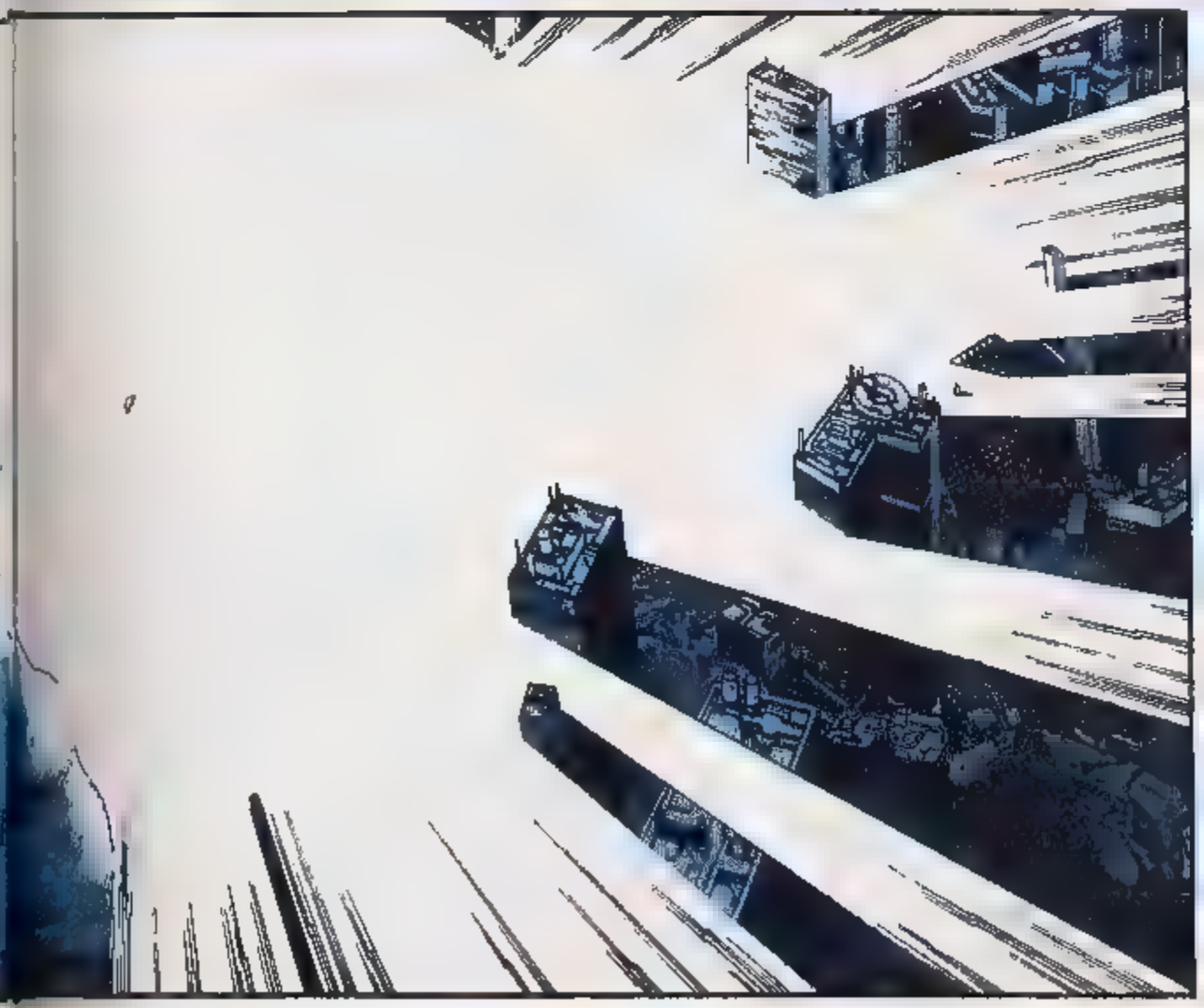
klink
?
WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
MMCCCAA!!

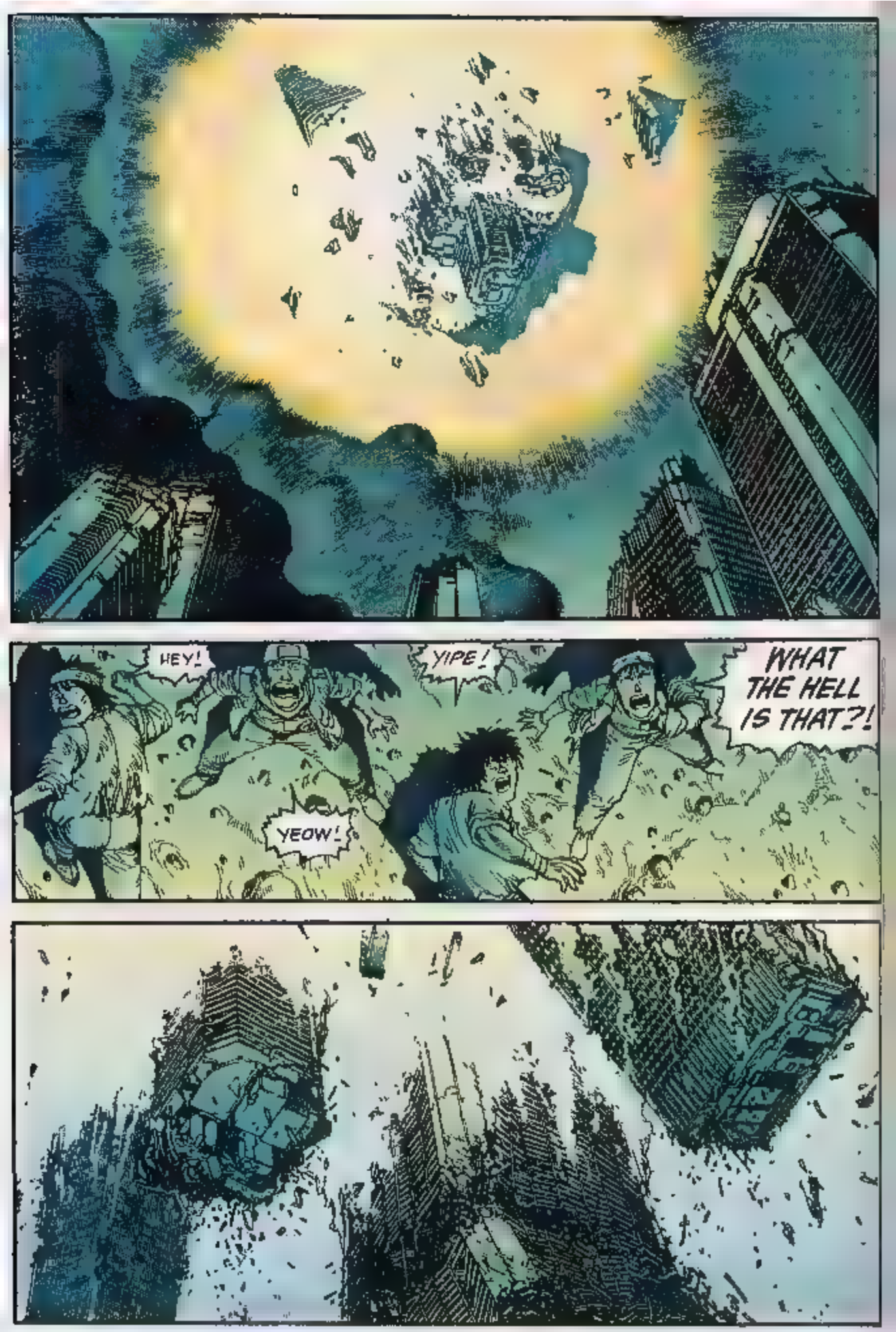
OH-OHH!
LADY MIYAKO!
ANSWER ME, KIYOKO!
KIYOKO!
..KI..YO...KO
BHOOON
LOOK!
WHAT IS THAT ?!
NO... THIS LOOKS DIFFERENT...
IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?

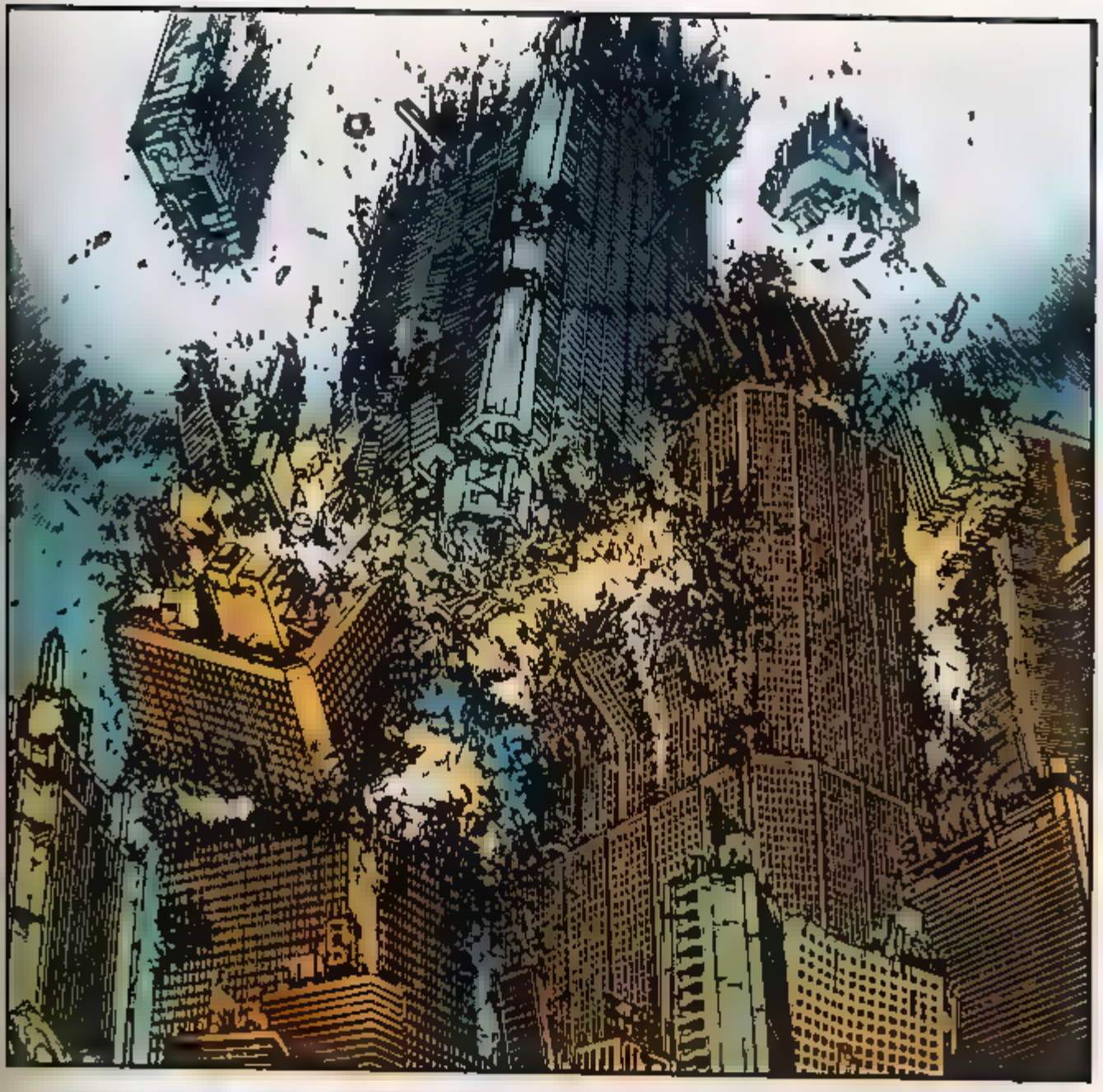


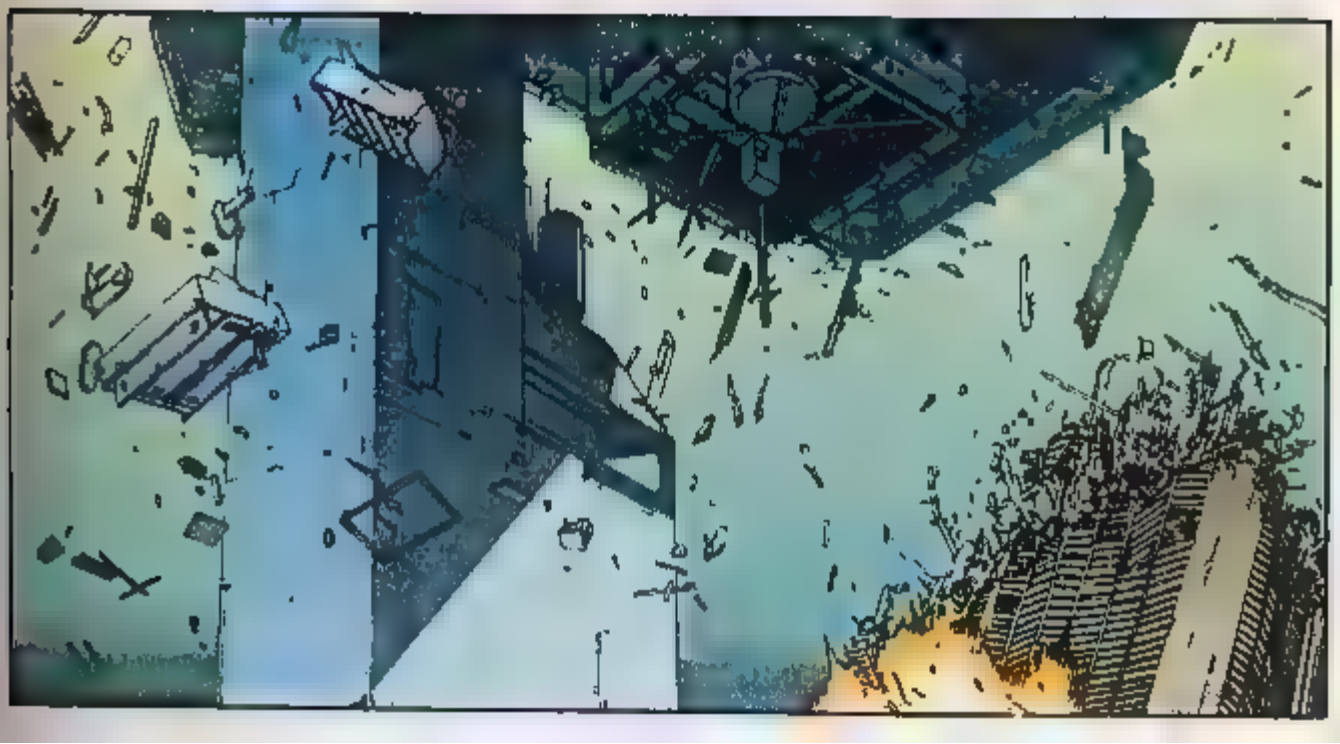
... THIS LOOKS LIKE...



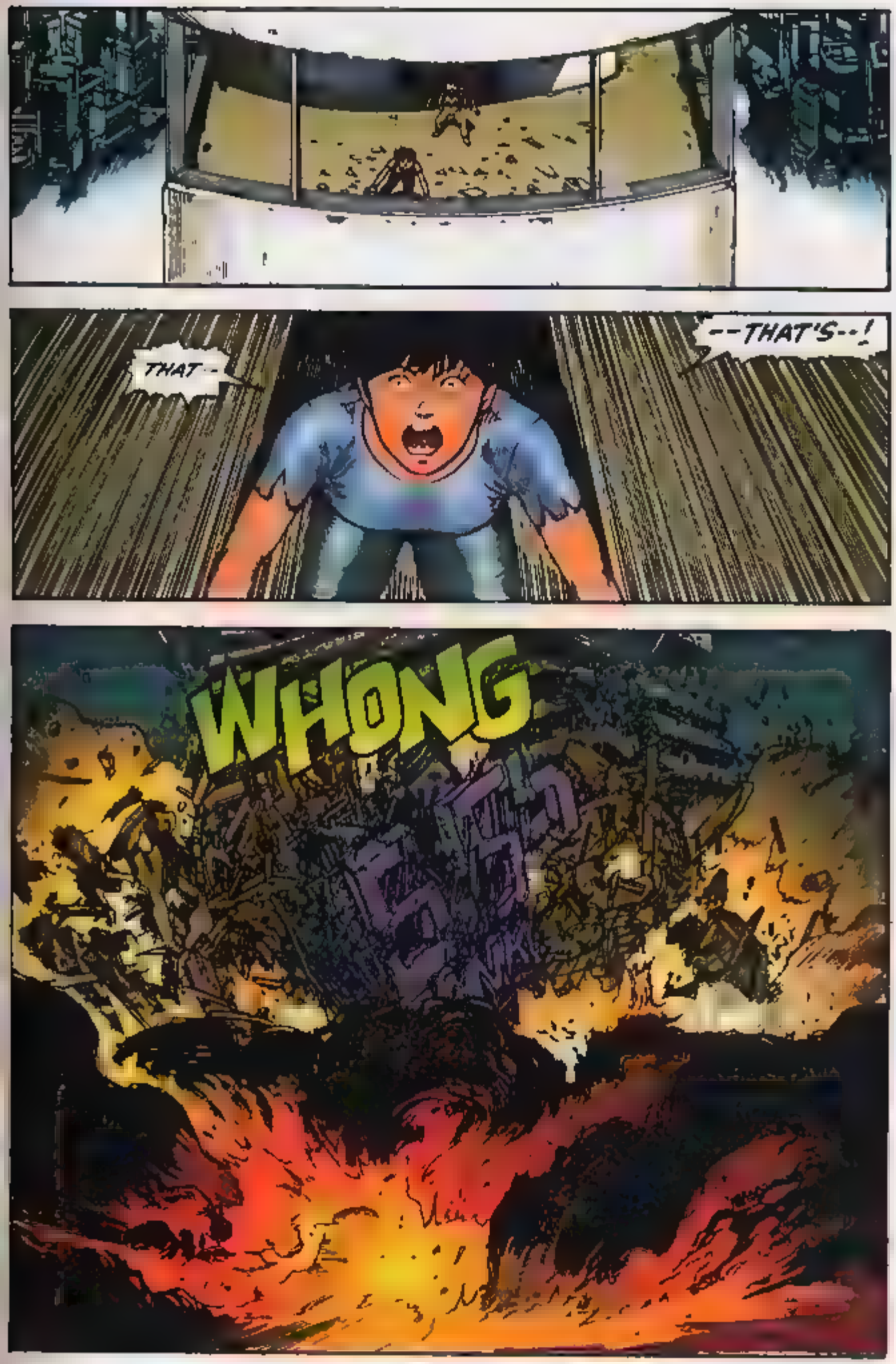



HEY!
YIPE!
WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!
YEOW!

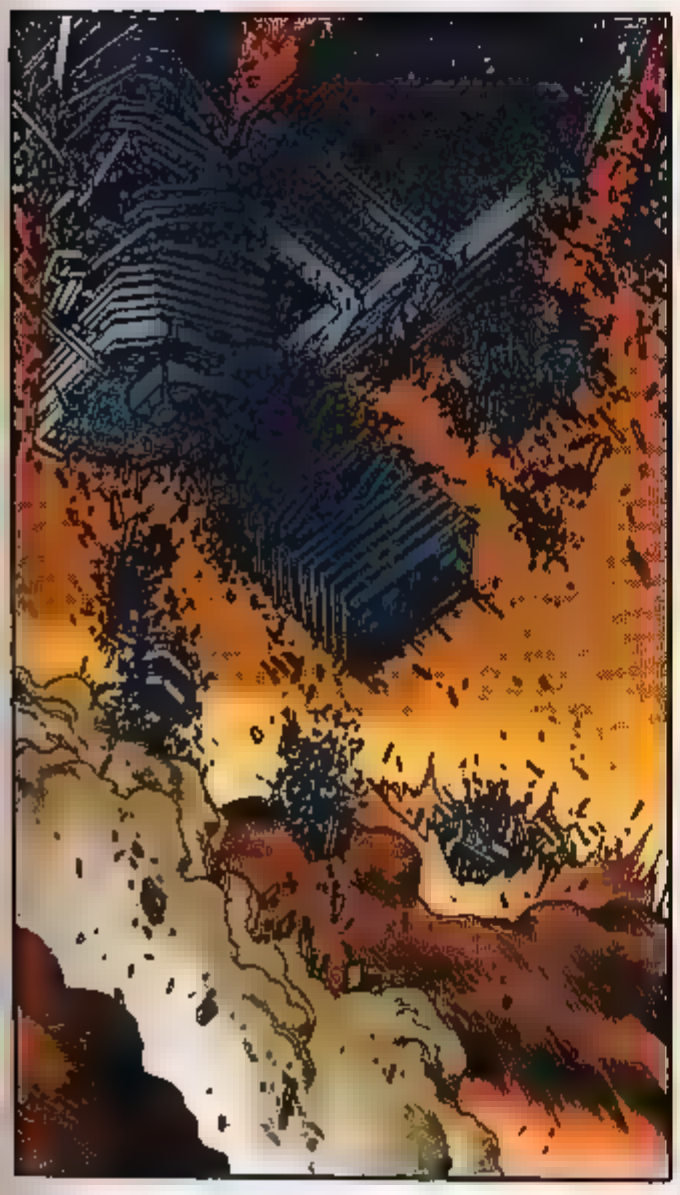


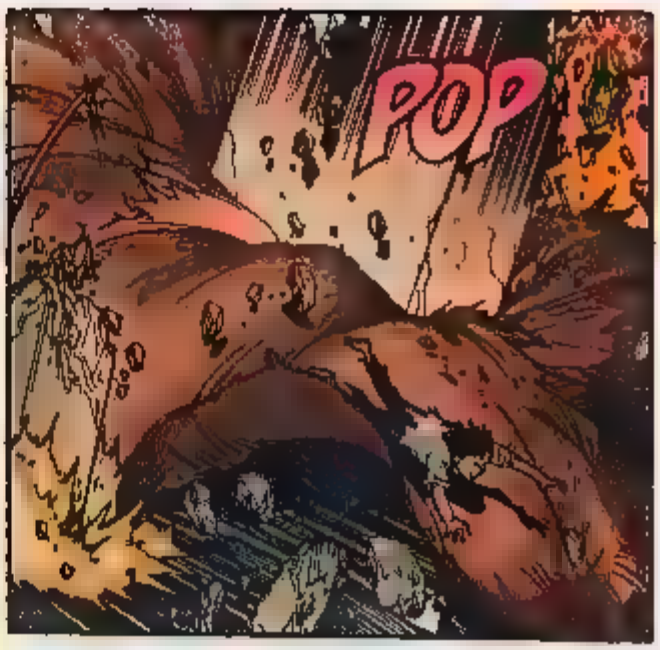


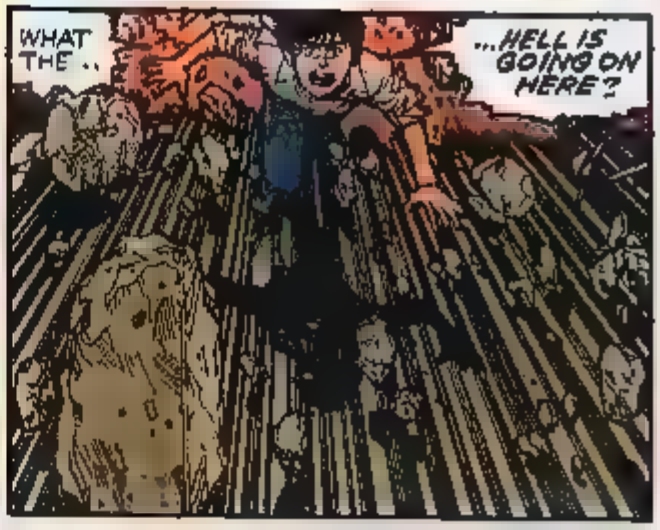
AAAAH!
AAUGH!


THAT--
--THAT'S--!
WHONG

OOOH..
AAUGH!
POW
FLOMP
WOW!

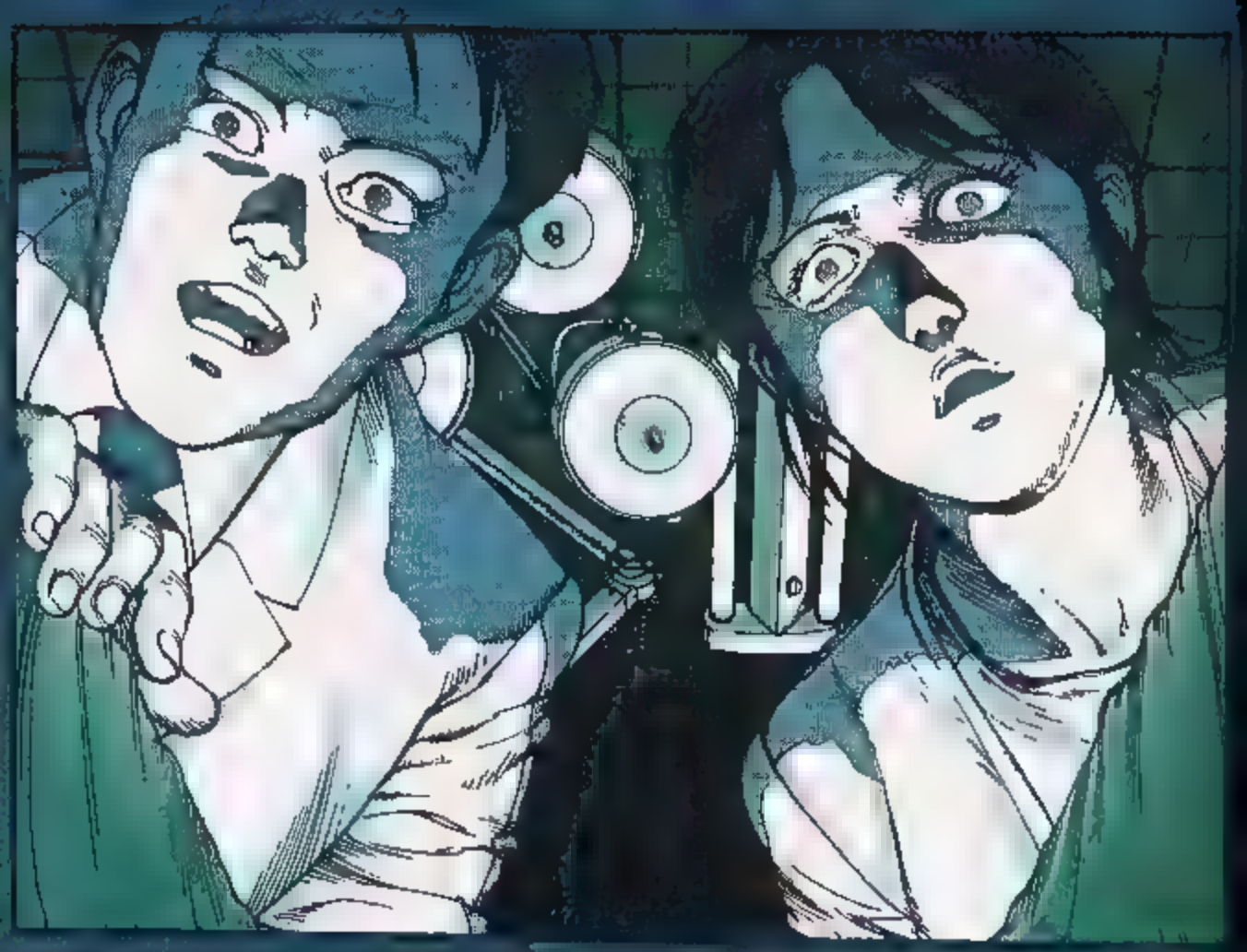


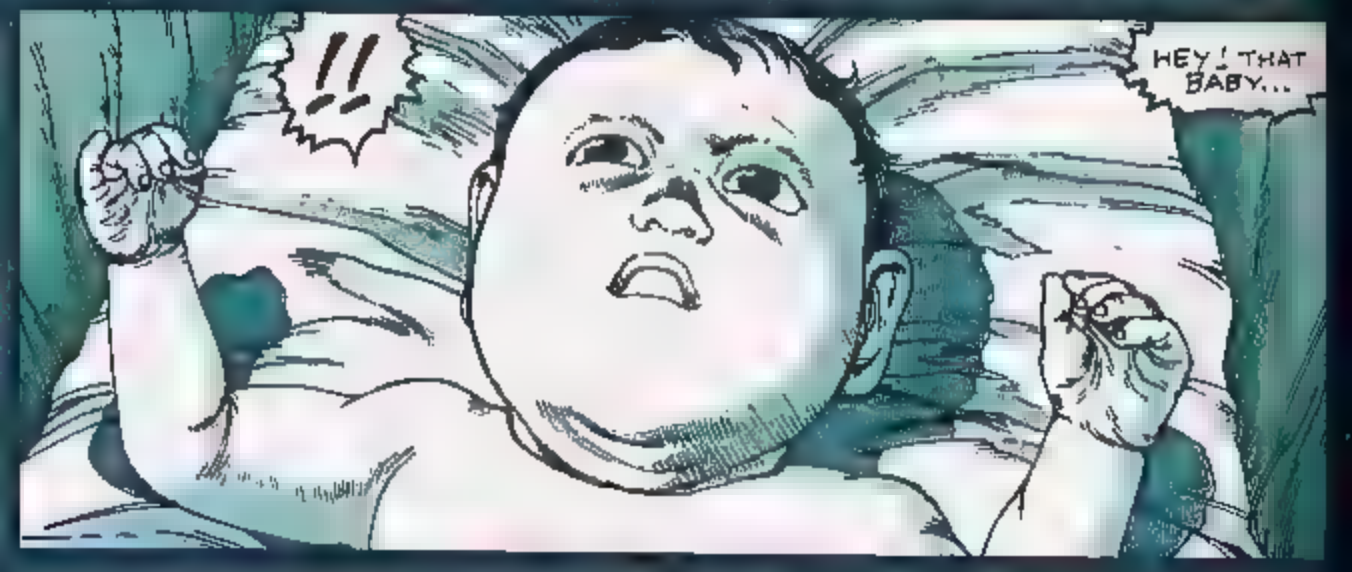

POP

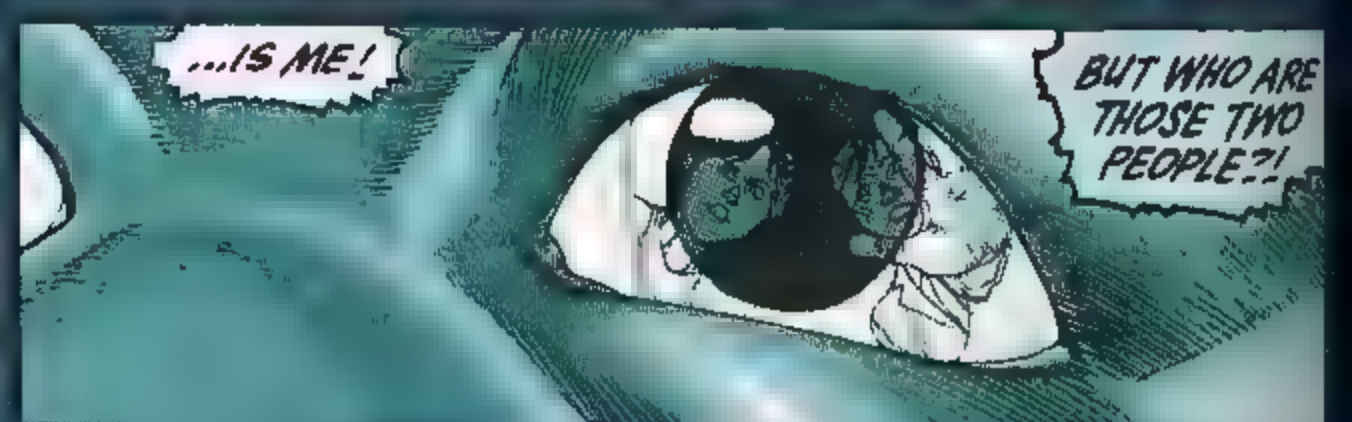

WHAT THE ..
...HELL IS GOING ON HERE?

!
EEEEEE
KEEEE

YAAAH!
STARS
HUNH?




!!
HEY! THAT BABY...


...IS ME!
BUT WHO ARE THOSE TWO PEOPLE?!

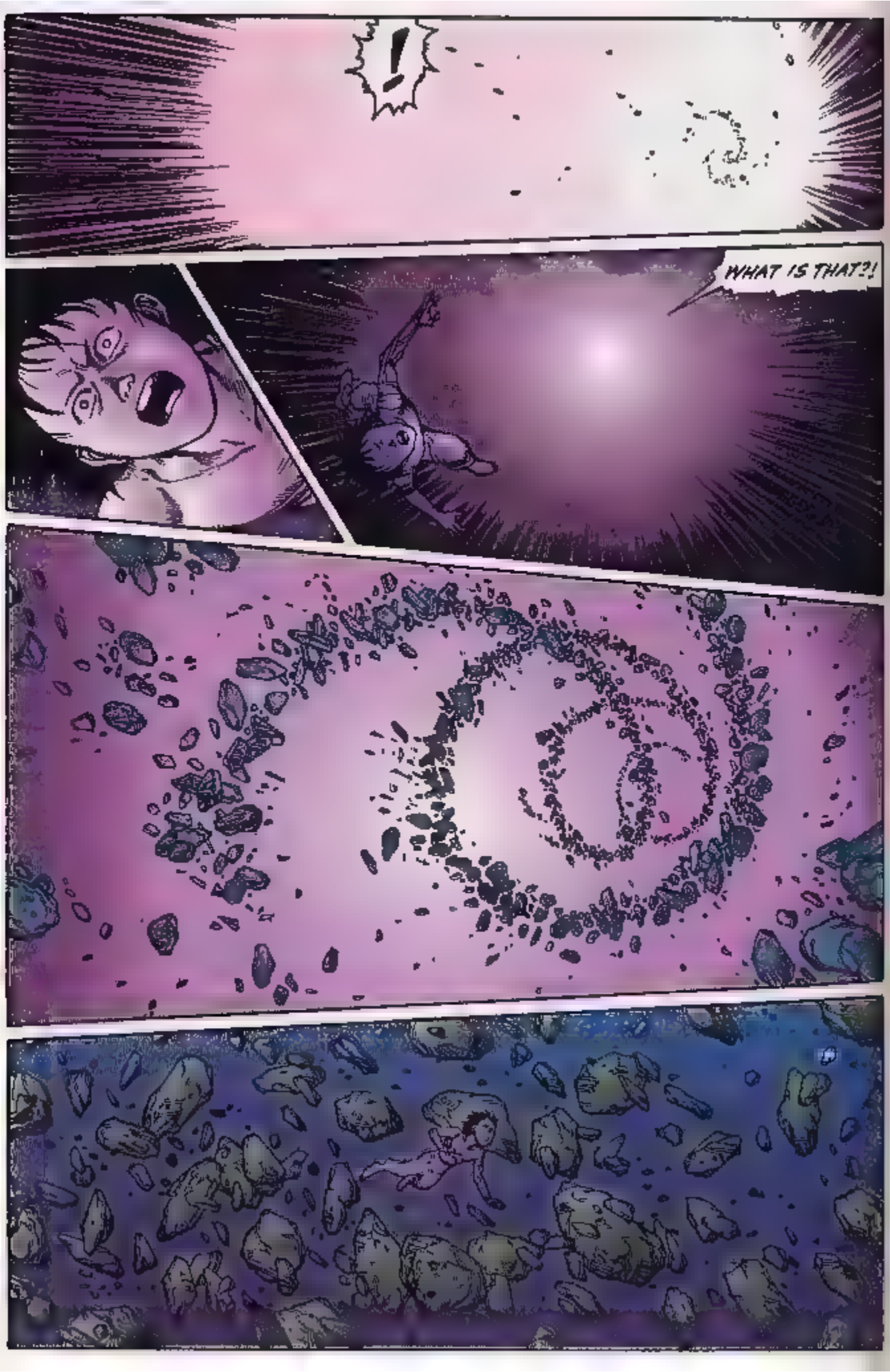
LOOK! HE'S SMILING AT US.
NAH. HE'S JUST YAWNING...
...AREN'T YOU TETSUO?
M..
..MOM!
D.
..DAD.
IT'S ME!
HERE.. I...
...AM!

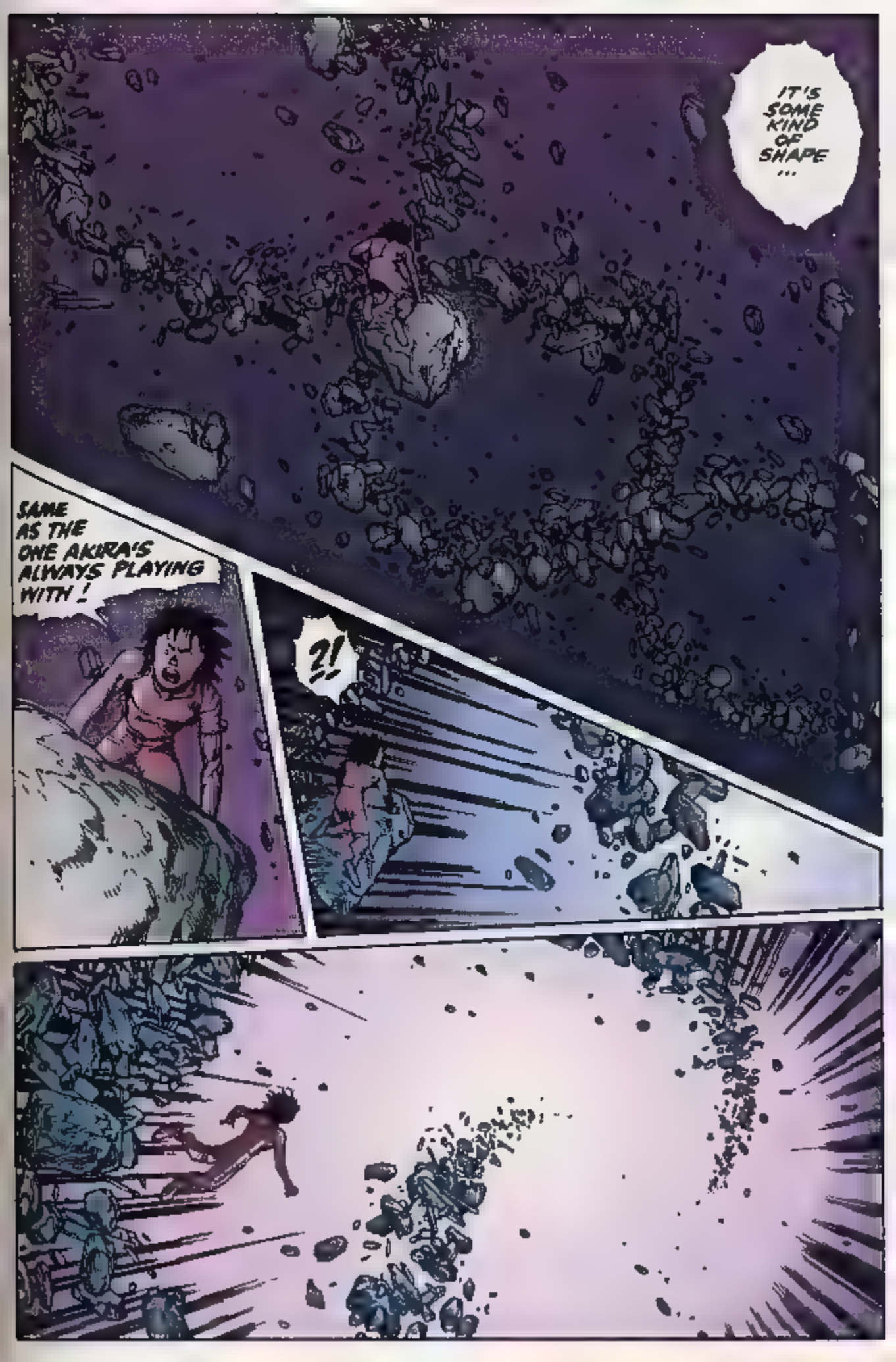
KRUNCH
STOP IT!

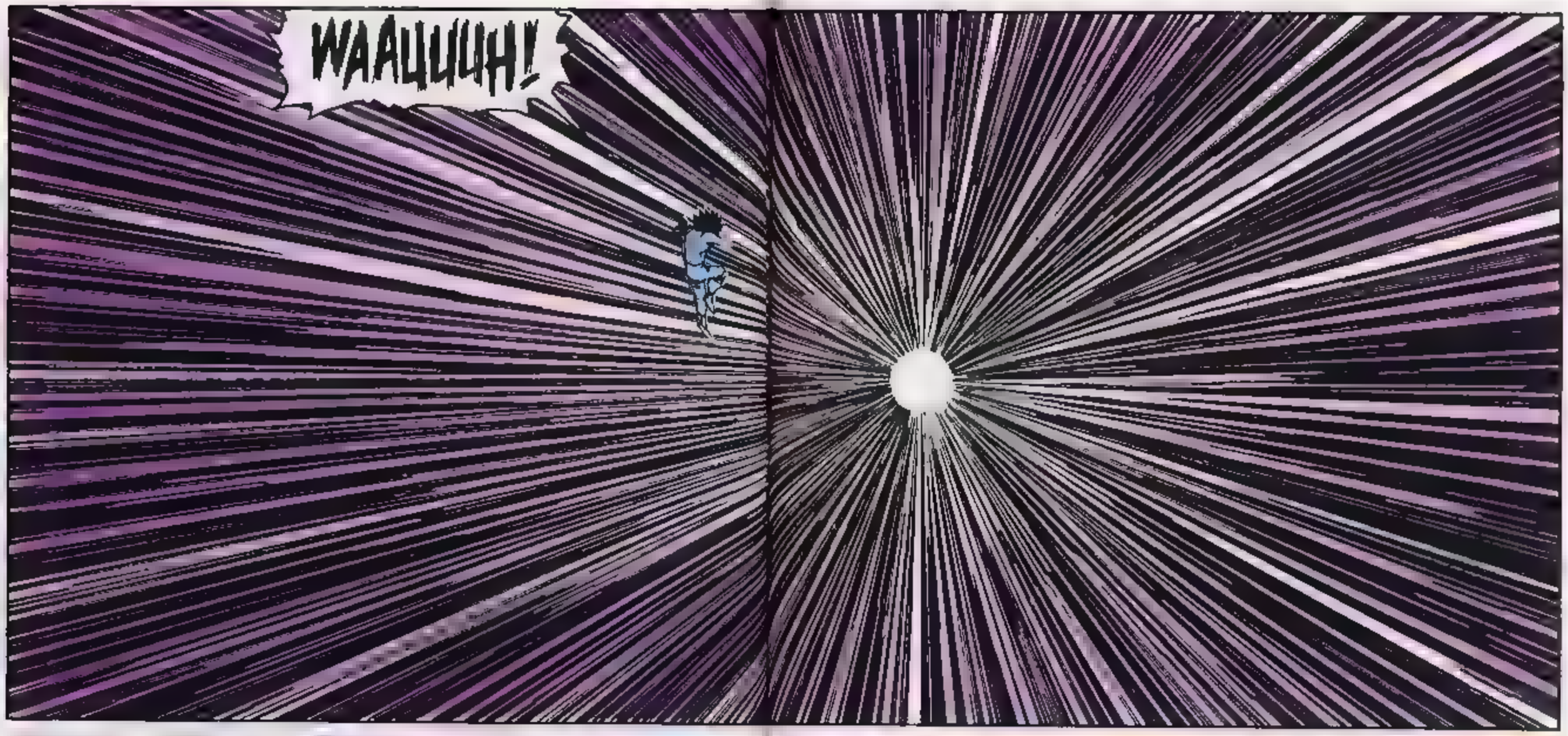
!
KANEDA!
!

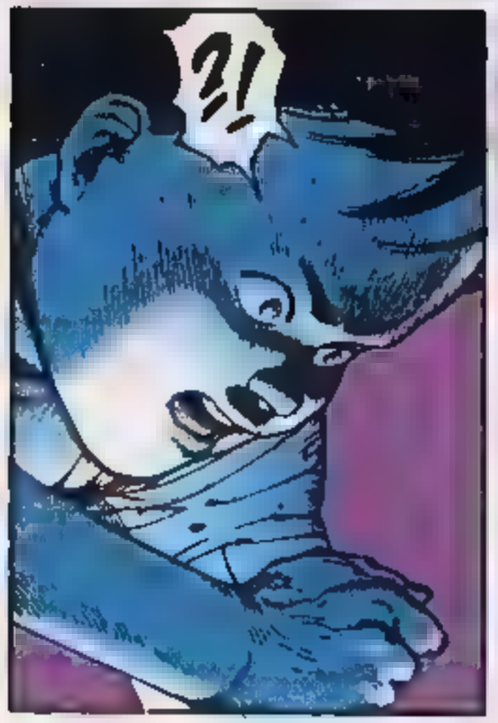
RRRRUMBLE
IS THIS YOUR CRY AT THE TRAUMA OF REBIRTH ...
NUM-BER 41 ?!
...KANEDA...

WHUH-OH!
AA'EEE!


!
WHAT IS THAT?!


IT'S SOME KIND OF SHAPE ...
SAME AS THE ONE AKIRA'S ALWAYS PLAYING WITH !
?!


WAAUUUH!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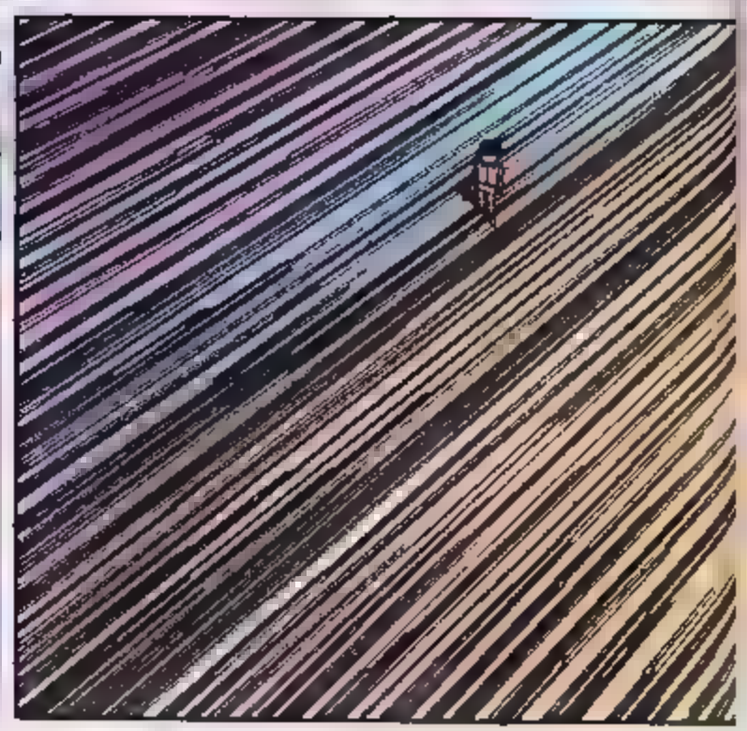
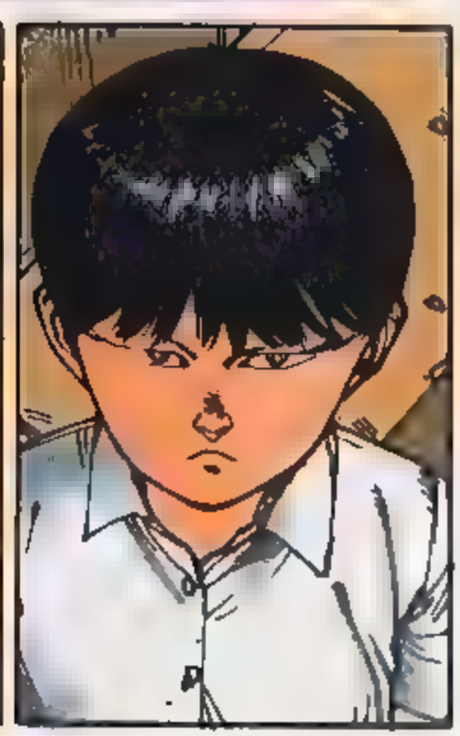
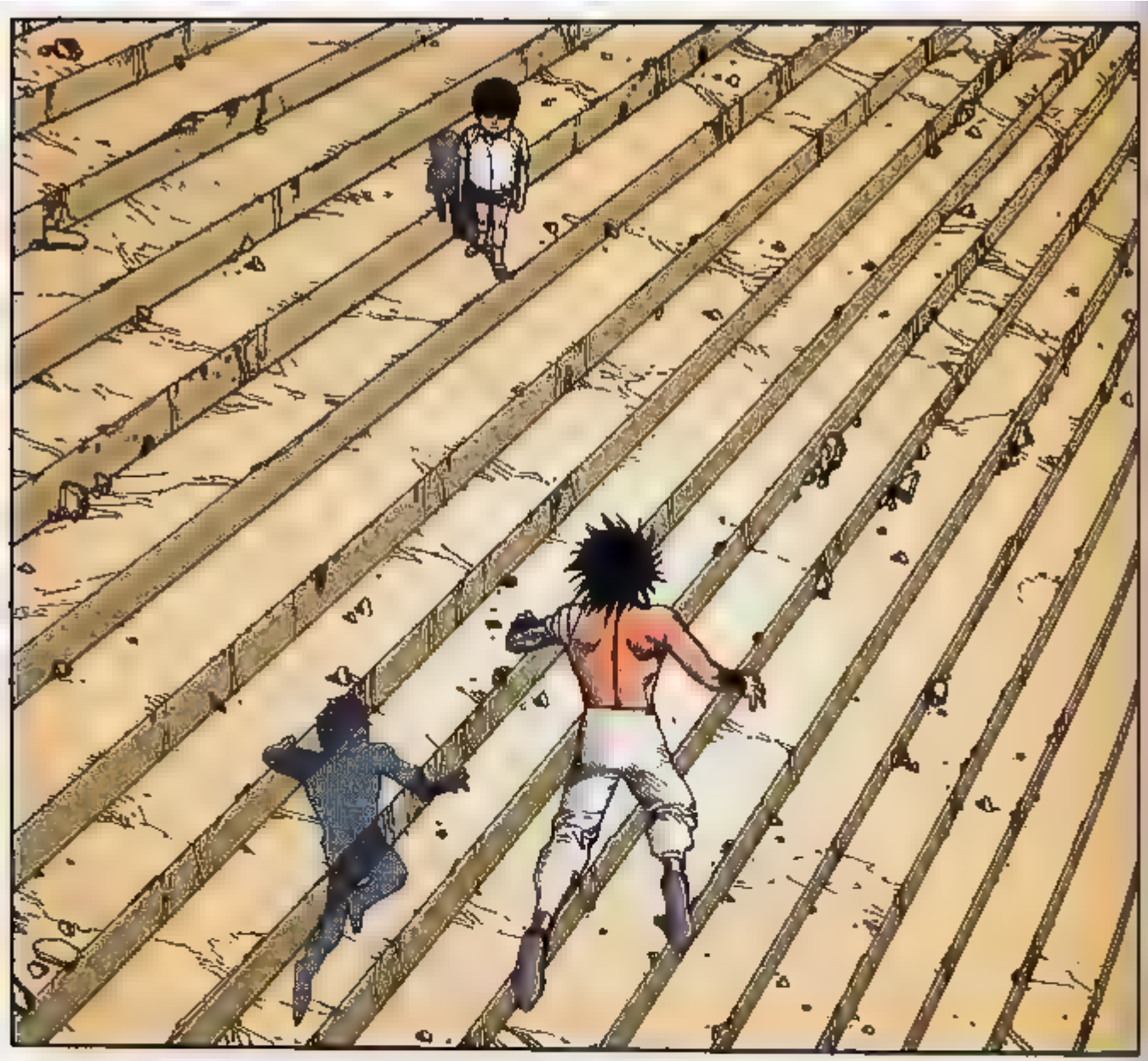
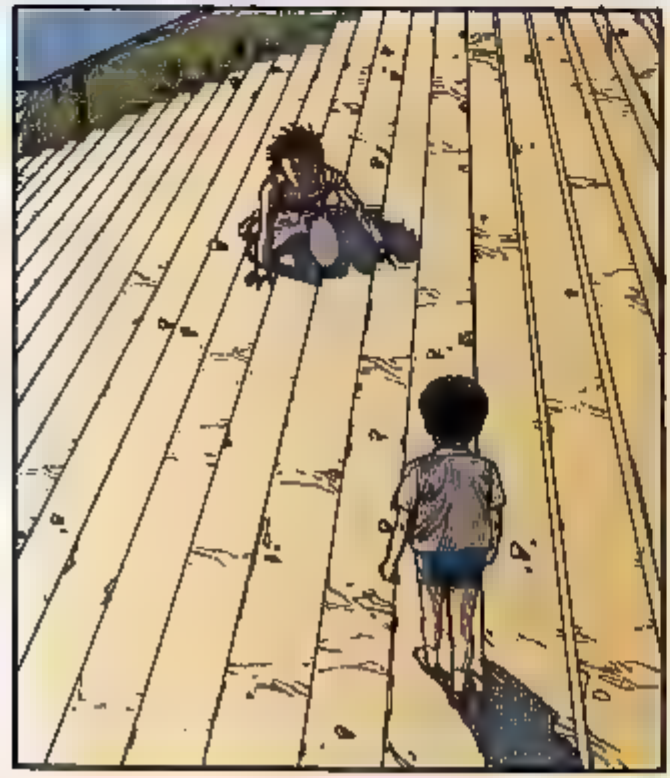
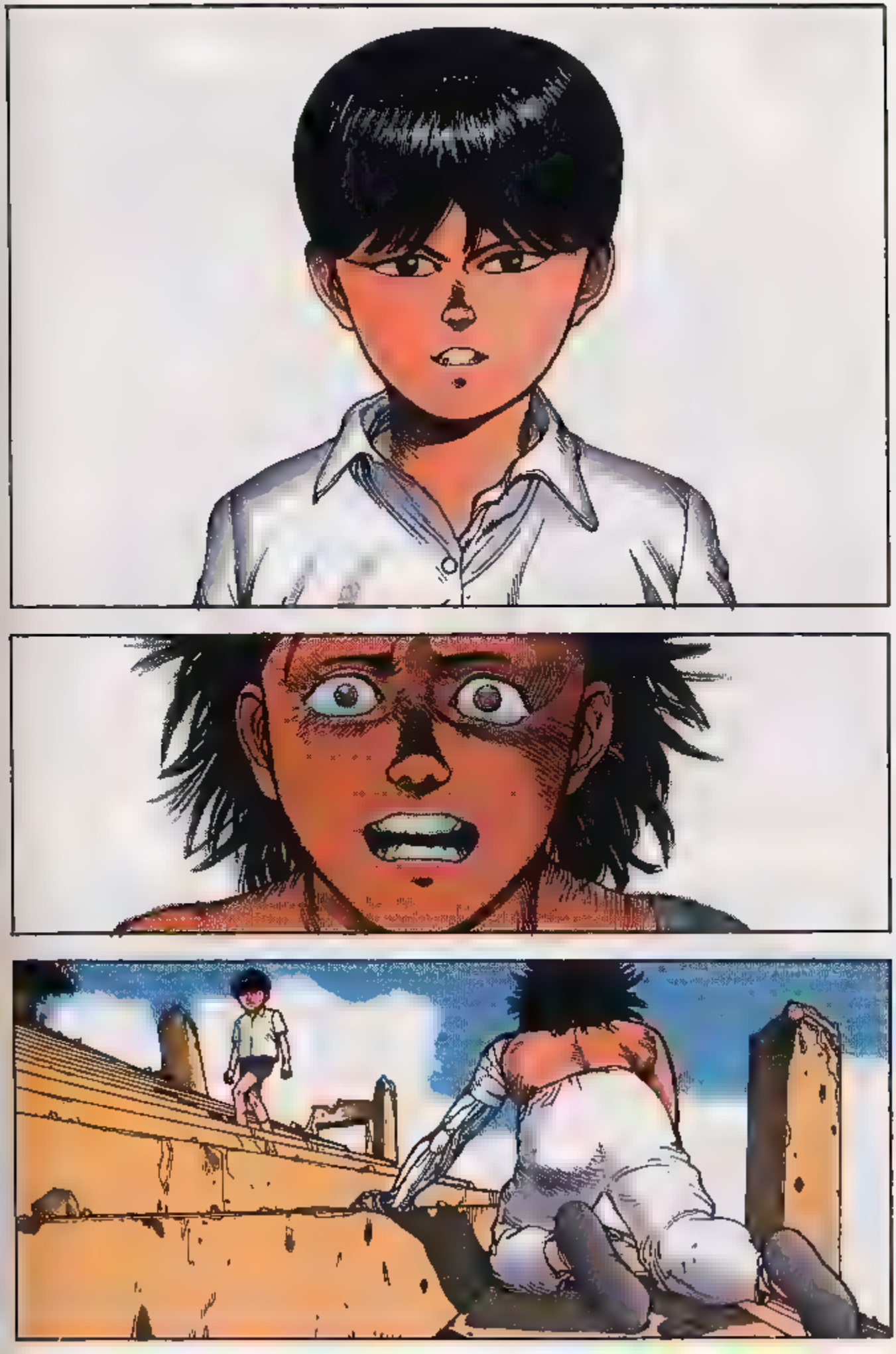




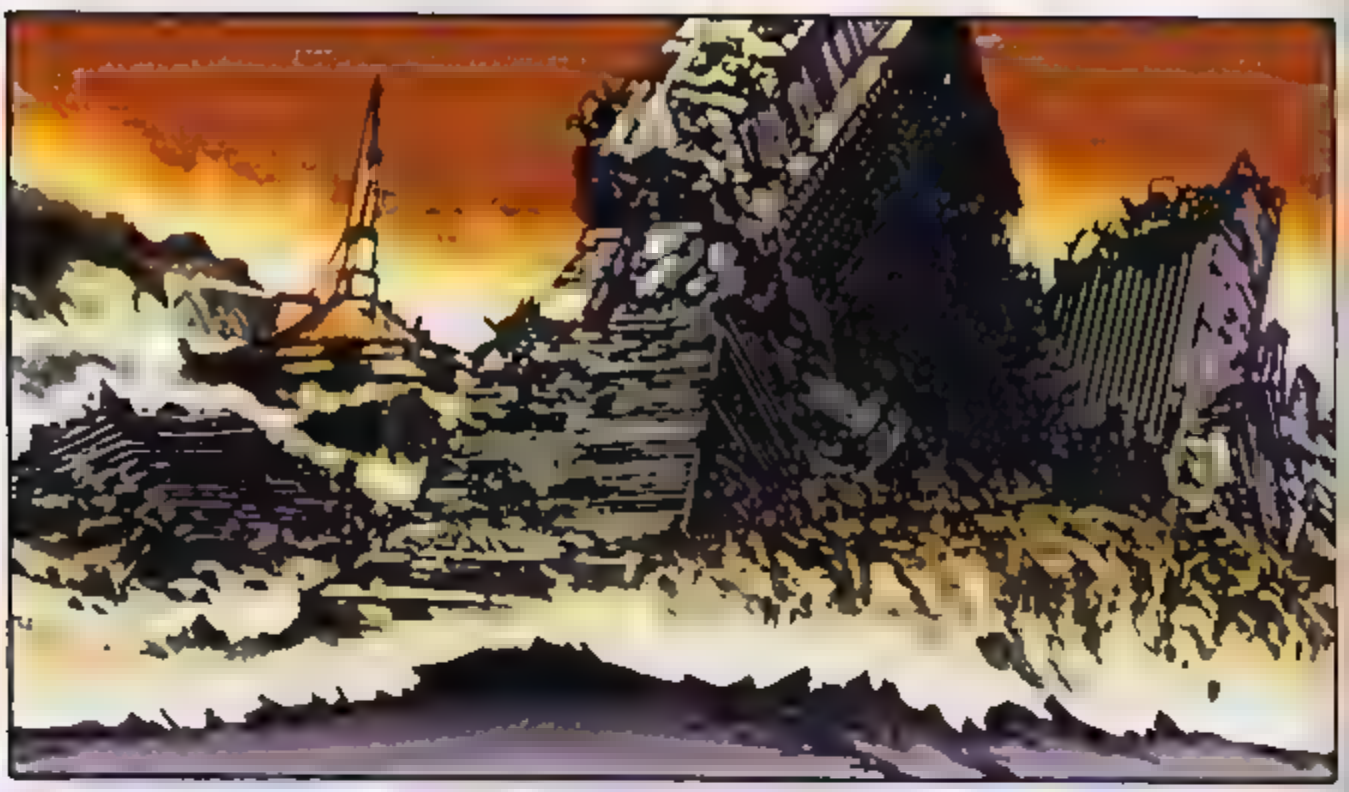


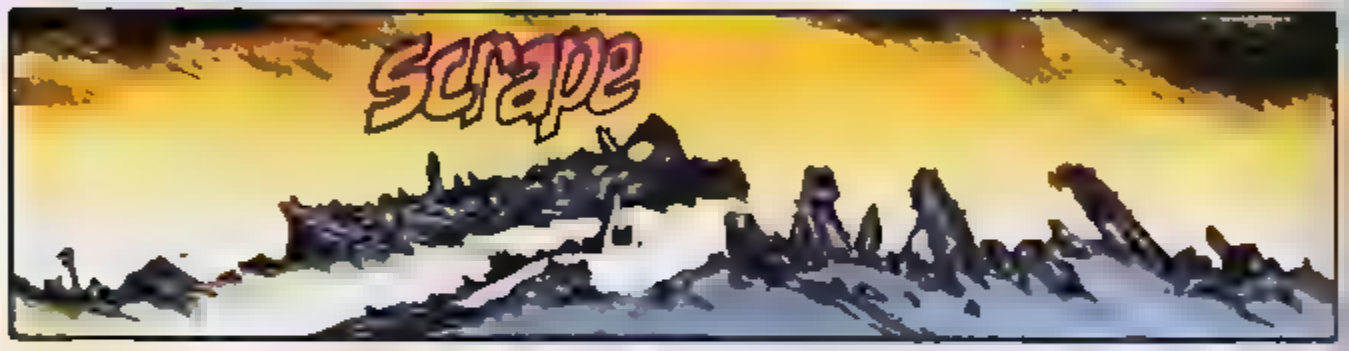


OH.



SIGH
I ONLY TOOK MY EYES OFF AKIRA FOR A MINUTE...
WHERE DID HE WANDER OFF TO?
OH!
SHAME ON YOU, DISAPPEARING LIKE THAT!
DON'T YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I WORRY ABOUT YOU?
GASP
--MASTER TETSUO!
MA





NEXT ISSUE **A WESTERN WIND**

Last month, Epic printed readers' comments on **KABA**, the collected illustrations of **Katsuhiro Otomo**. Lack of available space limited the number of comments printed, so we are continuing this month with **KABA: Readers Respond.**

"A great book! Not many good art books from Japan are available in Washington, DC, and it was truly good luck to find this one. Katsuhiro Otomo is very talented, I'm glad Kodansha has immortalized him in this wonderful book."

—Nick Heitzman
Washington, DC

"It's a wonderful package, really—the paper, printing, and colors all make KABA a book I'll treasure for years to come, not forgetting Katsuhiro Otomo's artwork, of course!"

—James A. Wu
Medford, MA

"A briliant collection of a brilliant author and artist, of comics."

—Steven Henry
London, England

"Excellent book, I haven't been able to put it down since I've bought it."

—Stuart M. Johnson
Savannah, GA

"Excellent production, design, and layout of text and art."

—Patrick N. Cosgrove
San Antonio, TX

"Great sequence on pages 60--66!"

—Kaveh Kardan
Montreal, Canada

"Classic! More than an illustration book."

—Wong Tak Wai
Hong Kong

"This art is a pleasant synthesis of intricate detail and sensitive feel for and expression of expression and emotion."

—Christian Simon
Newark, CA

"Very impressive! I enjoyed the information about Mr. Otomo and his workshop."

—Henry Rieke
Morgantown, WV

"Excellent. I've never seen artwork this good. I would like to be an illustrator, and KABA is very inspirational. I thank you for what you've done."

—Daran B. Chapman
Dearborn, MI

"KABA rules!"

—Neil Barrie Hodge
Ontario, Canada

"Please publish a second book! I'm dying to get it."

—Hiro Yakakura
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

"I enjoyed the book and was pleased to find it in English. I enjoyed the detail on the book and the fine pictures and the drawing. In the future I hope many more books like this will come out so that people will understand that animation is not just for children."

—Tom Miller
Revere, MA

"I love Otomo's works. Please make more available. The artwork is radical and the story is always excellent."

—Mark Cota
Poughkeepsie, NY

"This is a wonderful piece of work. However, I would have liked to read more of Mr. Otomo's comments on his art. Thank you for this book."

—Le Dong
Paris, France

AKIRA: the movie
AN UPDATE

Upcoming **AKIRA** dates include:

BOSTON AREA
BROOKLINE, MA
COOLIDGE CORNER MOVIEHOUSE
August 31—September 13

KEENE, NH
PUTNAM SCREENING ROOM
September 7—9

WICHITA, KS
NORTH ROCK SIX
September 13

WATERVILLE, ME
RAILROAD SQUARE CINEMA
September 14—20

PLEASANT STREET THEATER
NORTHAMPTON, MA
September 19—25

Also, look for **AKIRA** in New York City at the New Film Forum in early Fall.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO
writer/ illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE
chief assistant to M. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI
SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to M. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA
designer • AKIRA calligraphy

AKIRA SAITO
designer • Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd

YOKO UMEZAWA
translation

KOICHI YURI
HISATAKA NISHITANI
editor • Kodansha edition

YUKA ANDO
editorial coordinator • Tokyo

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI
managing editor • New York

Epic Comics

JO DUFFY
english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF
with the
OLYOPTICS COMPUTER CREW
colorists

MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

MARIE JAVINS
assistant editor

MARGARET CLARK
editor

CARL POTTS
executive editor

Power. Its touch, its taste, its feel... that's the order of the day in Neo-Tokyo. It is from the desire for power that Tetsuo's aide once more advances his army into the temple of Lady Miyako, eager for the secrets within. It's in the use of power that the Colonel unleashes his secret weapon—with devastating results. And it's for the meaning of power that Tetsuo is catapulted into a search for an understanding of his psychic abilities, a journey that takes him from the infinity of the stars to the deep recesses of his own soul..

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

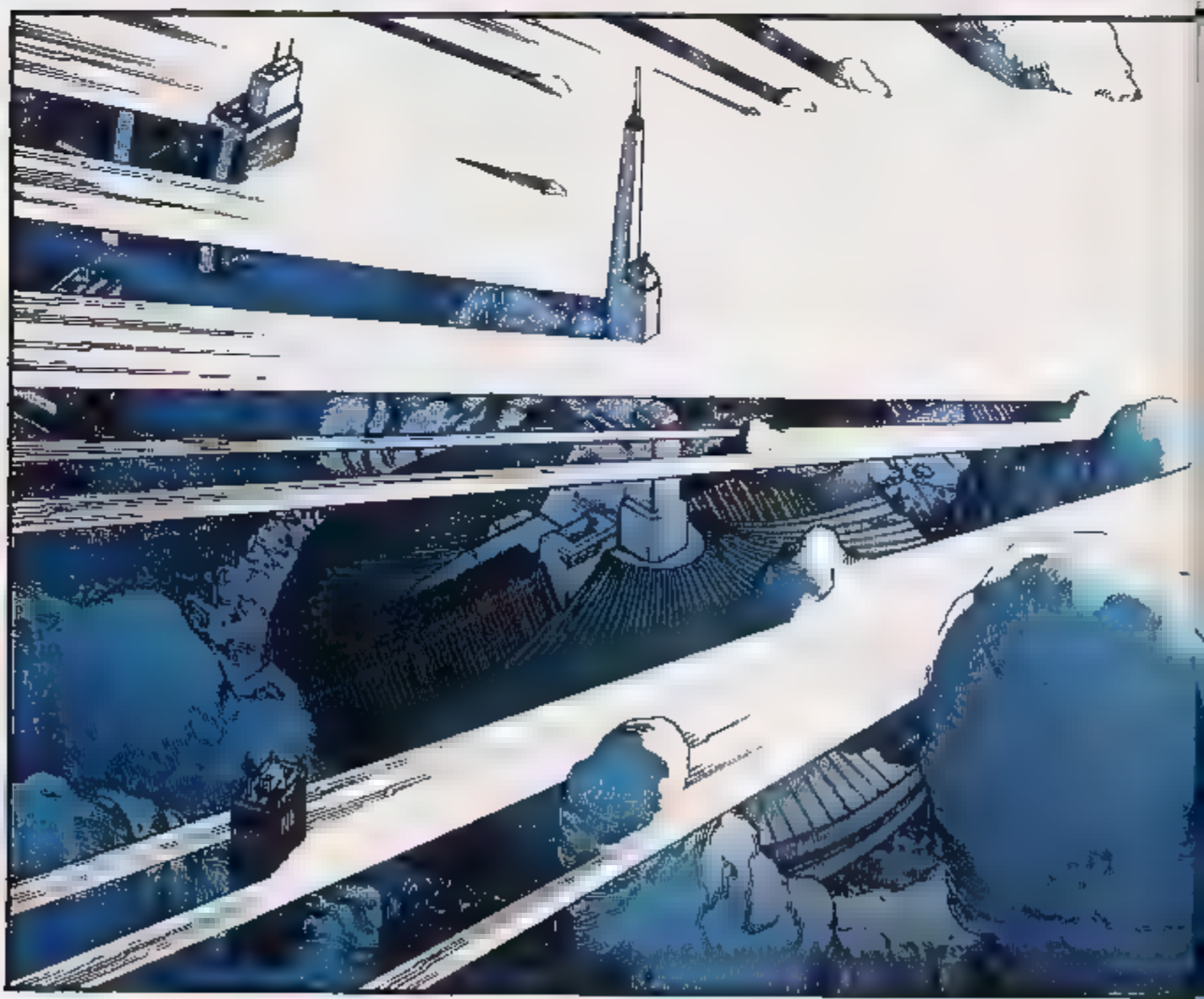
AKIRA

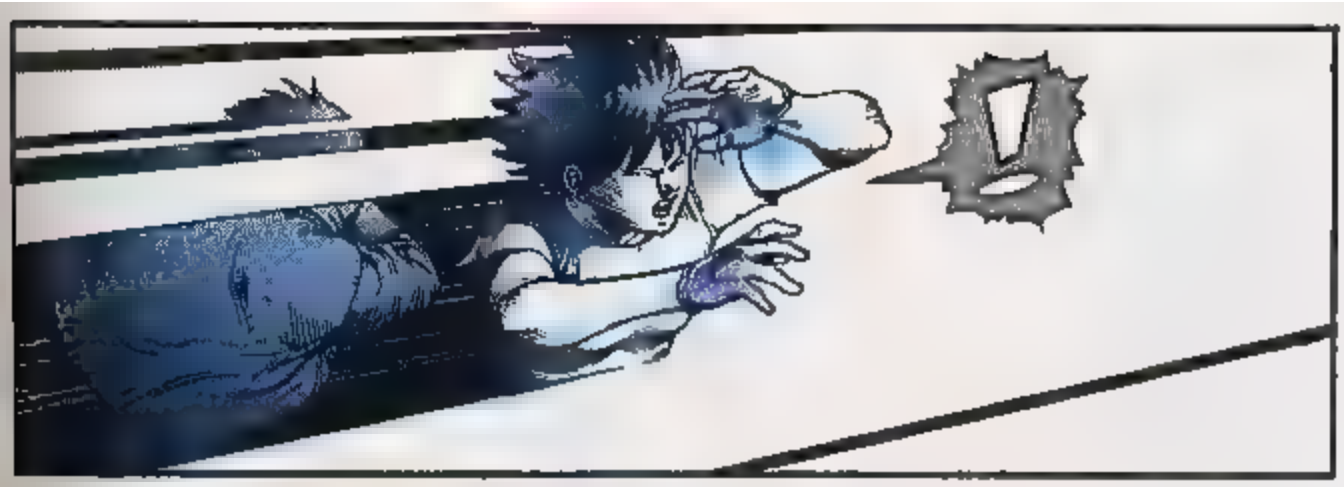
This scan produced by:

I love um

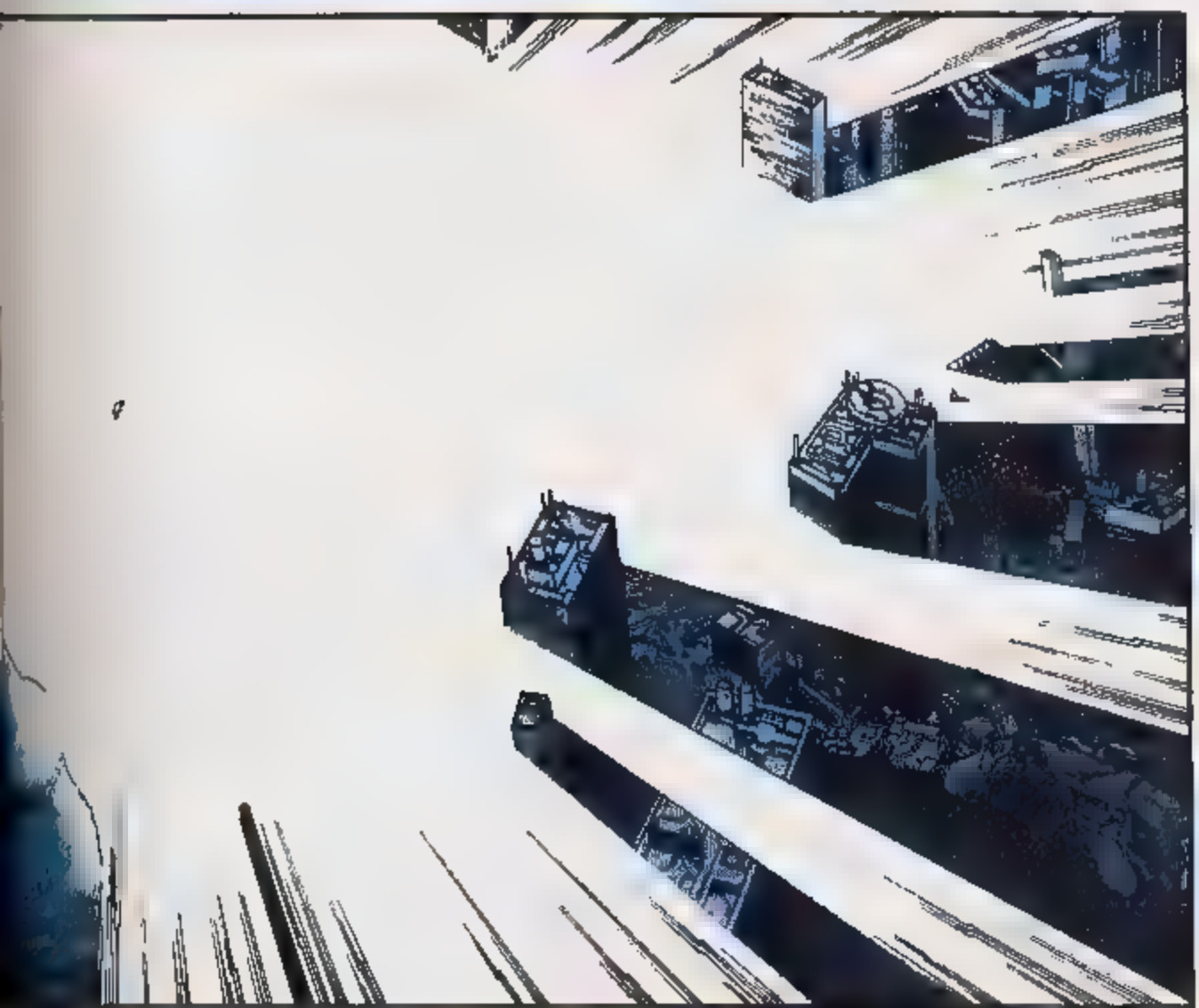
I buy um

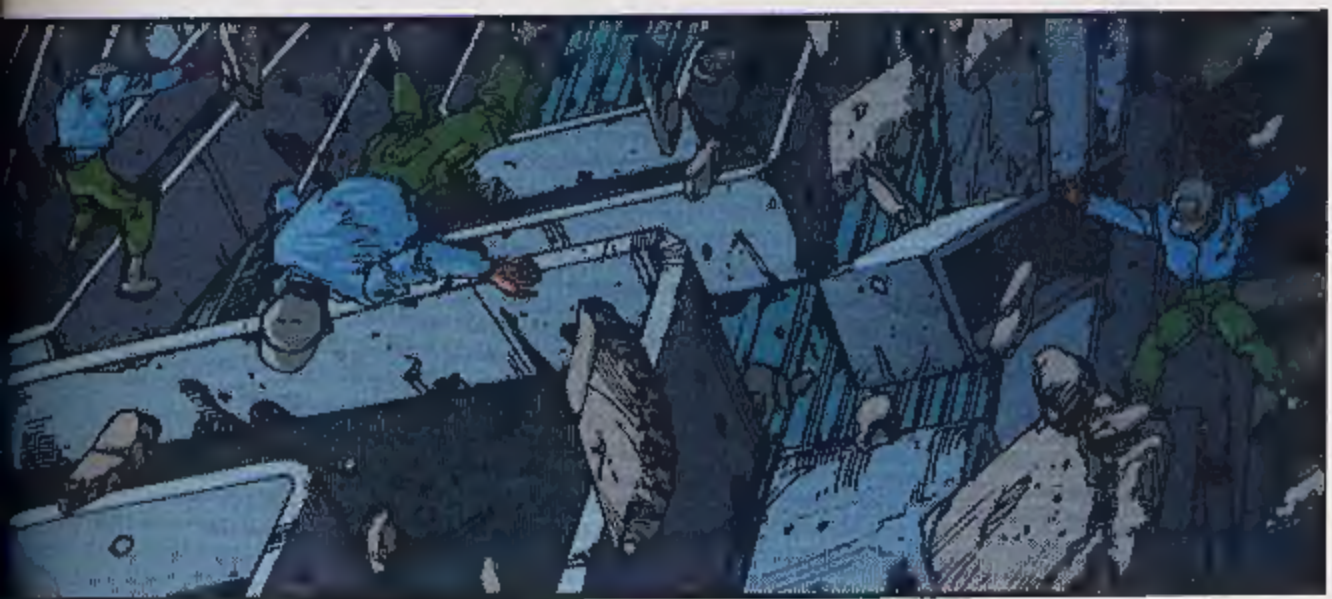
I preserve um

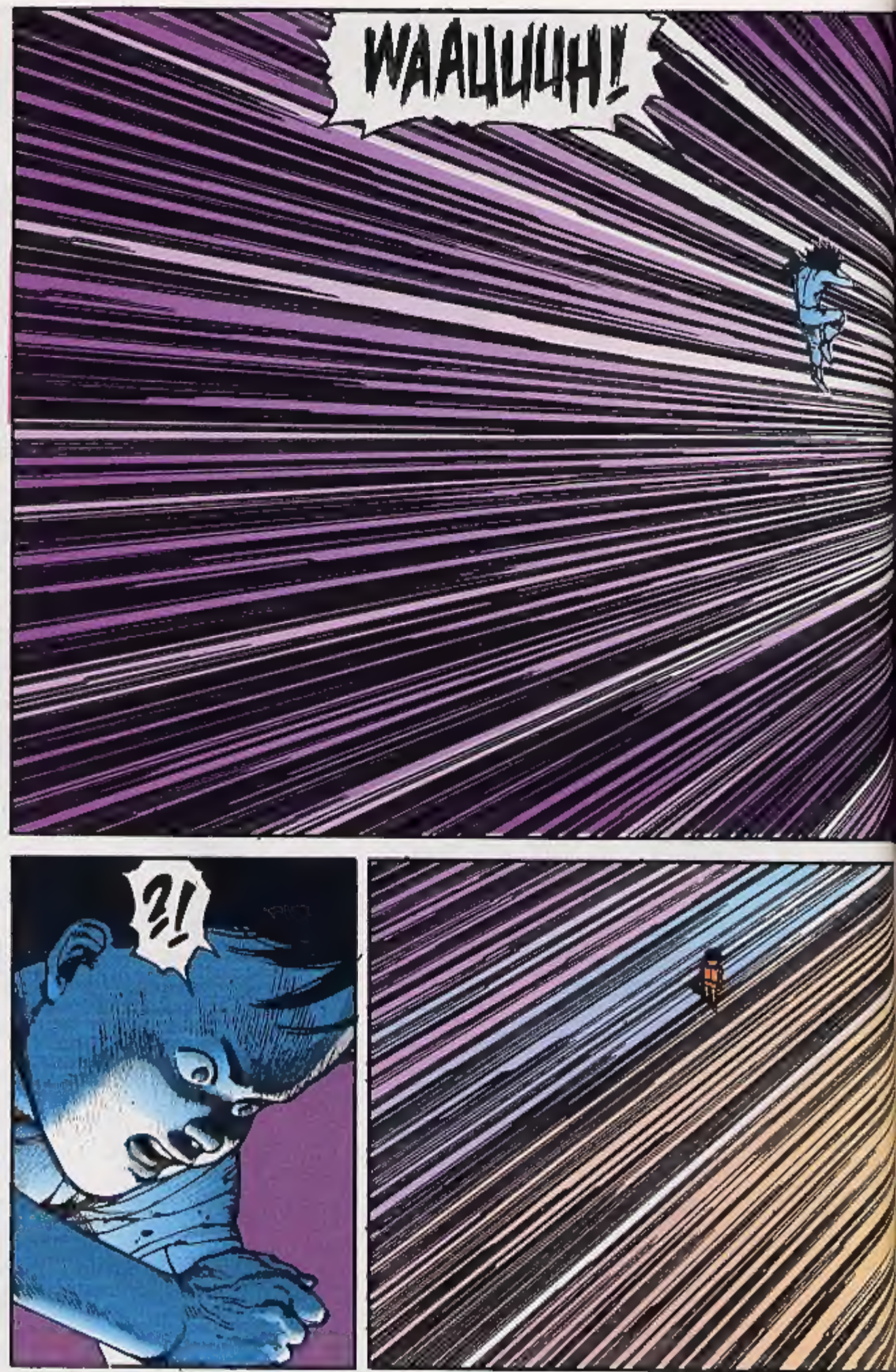




... THIS LOOKS LIKE...






WAAUUUH!
?!